THE RUNNER

RALPH CONNOR

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THE RUNNER

Books by

RALPH CONNOR

THE RUNNER

BEYOND THE MARSHES

BLACK ROCK

THE SKY PILOT

OULD MICHAEL

THE MAN FROM GLENGARRY

GLENGARRY SCHOOL DAYS

BREAKING THE RECORD

THE PROSPECTOR

THE PILOT OF SWAN CREEK

GWEN

THE DOCTOR OF CROW'S NEST

THE LIFE OF DR. JAMES ROBERTSON

THE FOREIGNER

THE ANGEL AND THE STAR

THE DAWN BY GALILEE

THE RECALL OF LOVE

CORPORAL CAMERON

THE PATROL OF THE SUN DANCE TRAIL

THE MAJOR

THE SKY PILOT IN NO MAN'S LAND

TO HIM THAT HATH

THE GASPARDS OF PINE CROFT

TREADING THE WINEPRESS

THE FRIENDLY FOUR AND OTHER STORIES

THE RUNNER

A ROMANCE OF THE NIAGARAS

BY

RALPH CONNOR

TORONTO, CANADA

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & GUNDY, LTD.

1929

PS8463 .O55R8

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DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & GUNDY, LIMITED
TORONTO

Printed and Bound in Canada
THE HUNTER-ROSE CO., LIMITED
TORONTO

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CHAPTER I

NIAGARA

From Atlantic salt water two thousand miles westward leads a mighty waterway right into the heart of Canada. Four rivers and the five Great Lakes constitute this waterway. Midway between salt water and the head of the lakes, four of these five Great Lakes gather themselves into one of the world's most picturesque rivers, the river Niagara, which then hurls itself headlong over a mighty cataract, and after swirling a dozen miles or so between lofty, precipitous banks empties itself into the fifth of the Great Lakes, the placid Ontario. Along this famous waterway, none more famous in the world, history on the Western Continent has been made.

Up and down this waterway, before the days of Cartier, the war flotillas of Iroquois and Huron with flashing paddle stole swift and silent on their mission of death. Up and down this waterway the intrepid explorers of New France, on their daring quest for new waters and new lands, pushed their adventurous way. Down this waterway, before the days of Champlain, from the far west hinterland of Canada the great bateaux of the fur trader, to the rhythmic swing of oar and paddle, made their way to Montreal and Quebec. And up this waterway, under the thrust of pole and paddle, these bateaux toiled with their bales of merchandise for the dusky customers in the far western forests. Up and down this waterway later there flowed the bloody tides of war. Frenchman against red man, English colonist and trader against French colonist and trader, French soldier against British soldier, and later—alas for the pity of it!—Britons against the sons of Britons. But all of these, warrior and explorer, trapper and trader, had to break bulk and make portage when they came to the turbulent Niagara.

And thus it came that in the early eighteen hundreds

the *Blue Bell* of Glasgow, trading out of Liverpool by way of the West Indies, laden with merchandise from London and with Jamaica rum, sugar, fruits, spices from the West Indies as well, after beating up the river with much tacking against a head wind found herself slowly swinging into The King's Wharf at Niagara to unload her cargo. On the wharf a crowd of longshoremen, carriers, farmers, freighters, and the like, stood watching the schooner make her landing.

Back from the wharf upon the rising ground were gathered the inhabitants of the little town, ladies and gentlemen, merchants, traders, chatting gayly as they waited eagerly for the packet of news which the ship should bring from the old world outside, critically appraising the seamanship of the crew in docking the vessel.

And a tricky business it was. For a still head wind was blowing down stream, and the Niagara was running strong between its steep banks. High up on the bridge the mate stood trumpeting his orders to the shoremen and proclaimed his Argyllshire forbears. "Waukem up, ye gomeral! Howk out yon line." Then followed a choice selection of mingled north and south country profanity descriptive of the ancestry and character of the unfortunate wharfman who had missed the catch.

High upon a pile stood a lad of fifteen years, tall, slight, dark skinned, watching the clumsy efforts of the wharfinger, clawing awkwardly with a boat hook at the floating line now being carried down stream by the swift current. Slowly breeze and current were swinging the bow of the ship away from the dock and out into the river. A second line failed to reach. The fury of the mate seemed only to confuse the various wharf hands, who with pike poles, boat hooks, and broken timbers were wildly fishing after the lines now moving beyond their reach.

"Look out there. Get your poles back!" cried the boy on the pile, and flinging off his buckskin jacket, with a clean dive he disappeared into the water. Cheers from the observers upon the bank, oaths and warning cries from the sailors greeted his plunge.

Soon the boy reappeared, swam toward the floating line, seized it, and headed for the shore.

"Pay out that line!" yelled the mate with stimulating oaths.

A few forceful strokes, and the boy was within reach of a boat hook to which he hooked his line, which was drawn up, turned about a pile, and made fast. Shouts of welcome greeted the boy as he clambered up the wharf, squeezed the water out of his hair and buckskin breeches, picked up his coat, and stepped down toward the schooner's gangway, utterly indifferent to the admiring looks and exclamations of the onlookers crowding about him. Pushing through the sailors busy with the gangplank strode the mate.

"Where is yon water kelpie of a boy?" he exclaimed. "Oh, you are there, eh? Look you! Do you want a berth on this ship?"

The boy shook his head. "No, thank you, sir."

The mate looked sharply at him. "Here, then!" said the mate, pulling a coin from his pocket.

Again the boy shook his head. "No, thank you, sir," he said with a polite bow.

"Ah! A chentleman, no less!" said the mate. "And above taking anything at all, I warrant."

"No, sir," said the boy. "I want some of your freight."

"And by the soul of me that same you will be getting or my name is not MacPherson. And what can the likes of you handle?"

"Anything I can lift, sir."

The mate looked him up and down. "Ay! And that will be no sae muckle."

"Try me," said the boy.

"Try you," said the mate, pointing to a hundred-weight bale which a sailor had flung on the wharf.

The boy leaped at the bale, lifted it on his knee, with a heave placed it on his shoulder, staggered up the sloping way to the bank above, with another heave flung it into a ramshackle-looking wagon waiting there, and came trotting back to the mate.

"Man! But you are the lad," said the mate. "Wait you here a bit. I will be having something for you in a wee while."

A big farmer approached the mate.

"I am handling that stuff, I guess," he said in a truculent voice.

"Ye are, are ye? Ye're handling what you get, Maister Crossley. And you will not be shoving your oar in where you're not wanted."

"My boss handles all those Hamilton bales and packages, Mr. MacPherson," said the man more respectfully.

"Do ye tell me indeed? Well-a-well! My compliments to your boss, whoever he may be, and advise him for me to get a freighter who will know how to carry himself in the presence of his betters. Stand back from here, I'm telling you, till yer betters are served."

So fiercely did the mate advance toward the would-be freighter that he gave back swiftly with a word of apology.

"Now then, lad, you bide here, at the side, out of the way, till I call for you. I have a thing for you a little later. And you, Mr. Crossley, get you yon bale out of that wagon to your own. And forthwith be attending to your business."

With that the mate turned away to busy himself with his duties.

For an hour the boy stood drying himself off in the sweltering August sun, gravely watching the stream of sailors, longshoremen, farmers, Indians, halfbreeds, and soldiers that passed in and out of the ship conveying the bales, boxes, barrels from her decks and hold to the wagons and carts waiting on the bank above to take them along the river trail to the upper landing above the falls, some dozen miles away.

The scene was one of sound and color. Sailors in fantastic garb of many climes; farmers in their coarse homespun, linen, hempen, and woollen, with fur caps of rabbit, coon, or fox; ex-soldiers in patched uniforms; Indians and halfbreeds in ragged buckskin, beaded and fringed; and with these here and there decayed gentlemen, once officers of famous battalions in His Majesty's forces—all in an eager rush. It was their harvest day. Singing, shouting, swearing, grunting, chaffing, laughing, according to their various kinds, they came and went.

At length out of the ship's bowels came the mate with a couple of sailors. He touched the boy on the shoulder.

"Boy, look you," he said, taking him out of the crush. "Is there no one with you? What is your name? Who are you? Whatna sort of a creature are ye whateffer? Who are ye? Speak to me!" In a perfect torrent the interrogations poured themselves upon the boy, who stood quietly waiting, his eyes steadily on his questioner's face.

"I am Sergeant Ross's nephew. I have——"

"Sergeant Ross? Will you by any chance be meaning Sergeant Ross of the Forty-second? Is he the——?"

"He is my uncle."

"God bless my soul! And it is the sergeant's nephew you are? Well-a-well! And is he about you here?"

"No, he is at home. I am doing the freighting myself. I have Black Hawk with me."

"Black Hawk? Black deevil! And whoeffer may he be?"

The boy turned toward the bank, put his fingers to his lips, and gave a shrill whistle. Immediately from behind his wagon sprang the form of an Indian.

The boy waved his hand. Down the bank with light springing steps the Indian came to them and stood straight, tall, and silent before them. One hand was crippled.

"Black Hawk, this is Mr. MacPherson," said the boy, waving his hand toward the mate, adding a few words in the Mohawk speech.

"Huh!" grunted Black Hawk, turning his piercing black eyes boldly on the mate.

"He is very quick and very strong," said the boy.

"He smells strong, too strong for my job. The Lord deliver me from a drunken Indian."

"Come, Black Hawk!" the boy said, turning away up the bank.

"Heigh, boy! Wait now! What then will be clawing at your back?"

The boy turned half round and stood eying the mate with a haughty stare.

"Black Hawk is my friend," he said shortly.

"Well, well! You are Sergeant Ross's nephew at the least of it. And as for your friend here, well—do I understand that it is Sergeant Ross's nephew that will be guaranteeing him, for all the smell of him?"

"Black Hawk is a Mohawk chief and is to be trusted—at least," added the boy after a slight hesitation, "till his work with me is done. We'll take your goods anywhere you say."

"Ay! These are not the ordinary kind of goods, and they are to be delivered with no unnecessary parade to the Honorable

Mr. Hamilton's store at Queenstown. See these sacks of flour, between which you may conveniently deposit these bags of bran, look you, for better carrying. And by the bye, you may just mention to Mr. Hamilton himself that Mr. MacPherson of the *Blue Bell* will be calling to see him himself. The carriage will be paid for at the other end. And the less said the better for all concerned. And these bags of bran are to be handled with extreme delicacy, you mind." The boy nodded.

First the bags of flour were packed in the bottom of the wagon. A layer of the bags of bran placed next in order, then another layer of bags of flour, and so on, till the load was made up. The mate kept near enough to give an eye to the loading and yet not so near as to appear to be supervising the proceedings.

"You will not be driving with undue haste, and your friend will not be making any veesits on your journey. This note will be for Mr. Hamilton's own hand. Not a clerk, nor any driver, like yon Crossley—you can see him keeking round that lumber pile, whateffer he may be wanting—and you will not be taking any helpers or assistants, by the way. Jist keep yoursel's till yoursel's. And—your name, lad? God forgive me! I was forgetting to secure your name!"

"René LaFlamme," said the boy.

"LaFlamme. *Vous parlez Française, ce n'est pas?*"

"Oui, monsieur."

"Ah, c'est bon. It is myself that has that speech as well," said MacPherson, dropping into his vernacular. "I too have lived in Paris. So that is all right. Now, lad, I am committing this cargo to your care. You are only a lad, but a lad that can act as quick as yon at the landing is a lad to be trusted. And no one will be heeding a boy in the least of it. Now, away with you, and God go with you."

The boy saluted and turned to hitch up his team. And an ill-matched pair they were. On one side of the tongue an old mare, a pot-bellied, shaggy, dispirited creature; on the other a black two-year-old colt, dainty stepping and clean limbed, with satin skin and an eye of fire. When the hitching was done René picked up the reins.

"Git up there!" he cried. The old mare was slow to move, but

with a spring the colt threw herself into the collar, jerked the old mare back upon the whiffletree, and finding the load immovable flung back and threw her beautiful head over the mare's back.

"Now, now, Gyp! What are you up to?" said the boy. Gently he drew the colt's head back to a proper position, stroked the quivering nostrils, talking quietly the while, led the old one up to the full length of her traces, touched her up with his whip, and once more taking the lines called to his team.

"Meg!" he shouted, stirring up the old lady with the butt of his whip in the ribs, "come out of that!"

With a snort Meg responded. A plunge from the colt, a lift on the hind wheel from Black Hawk, and the wagon was out of the soft ground and safely on the road.

"Steady, Gypsy, my girl! Take it easy now! Whoa, till we get on!"

"Nice colt, eh?" René looked round and found Crossley at his side. "Mighty fine colt that. That mare her mother?"

René nodded.

"Three-year-old?"

"Two," said René, drawing up his lines.

But Crossley was at the colt's head, rubbing her nose gently. "Say! You're heavy loaded for that team. The roads are real rutty, and the swamp is terrible."

"I guess we'll make it," said René.

"Say! I'm going up light. I'm going to Hamilton's too. I guess mebbe you'd better throw some of that stuff into my wagon. I'll be going in an hour or two."

"I'm going right away," said René.

He spoke to his team, the colt leaped forward, stood on her hind legs, missing Crossley by inches, and they were away.

"Here! Look out there! You blame near ran me down."

René nodded and drove on.

With an oath Crossley shook his fist after him.

"I'll get you yet, you young whelp!" he shouted.

"Good-bye," said René with unmoved face. "I'll tell Mr. Hamilton you're coming." And he sent his team along at a smart trot.

"He's an ugly devil," he said to Black Hawk.

"Huh!" grunted the Indian. "Much big debbil him."

The road for the first half of the journey was well surfaced, but the old mare was slow, and René was careful not to overdrive his colt. After an hour's going they came to a stream; they drew off into a grassy camp ground among the trees, where they proceeded to water and feed. There was no hurry, for though the afternoon sun was down to the treetops there were still some hours of the August twilight left. Some late freighters were hurrying past in a constant stream. They were anxious to get their loads delivered in order to return for a second load. It was a harvest day for the freighters, and time was money.

There was no sign of Crossley, for which René cared little. The swamp road was at its worst. The pitch holes fretted Gypsy to madness. A wild lunge into a bog hole, a crash, and the team were away with the pole and dragging René after them over the dashboard. But old Meg was no runaway, and soon she drew Gypsy to a standstill on the roadside. A glance showed René the wagon tongue broken at the king bolt. To make a new pole needed an augur. He gave Black Hawk his orders.

"Get a new pole, cache the bran sacks, unload the flour bags on the roadside. I'll ride to Servos' place for an augur. We'll have to hurry." But hurry as he might, the light was dim when René returned to find old Meg tied to a tree but Black Hawk vanished, no pole, and the cache rifled of half its bran sacks. Circling round for signs, René came upon a trace of flour white on the black mud and the print of a moccasin. Like a hound on a scent René followed the trail along the road, then off on a bush trail. Running hard, he came to a clearing in which stood a stable and beside it a team and wagon—Crossley's? Yes, Crossley's. At the edge of the clearing he stood listening. An owl hooted softly. René replied. At once came an answering hoot. In a few minutes he was listening to Black Hawk's story. Crossley and a companion had come upon the wrecked wagon, had attacked Black Hawk and made off with half the load of bran sacks. A bloody welt from the butt of Crossley's whip stalk showed on the Indian's face. René did some hard thinking. Two powerful men were too much for a boy and a one-handed Indian.

"I'll take a look at them," said René. The Indian caught his arm.

"Me go," he grunted and was away, silent as a shadow. In a few minutes he reappeared.

"Ho! Much drink. Lie on hay, drink, drink. Him soon go sleep!"

Together they crept toward the stable. The men were lying upon a bundle of hay each with a bottle in his hand. René pointed to the stable door. There was no other exit. The door was fastened by a stout bar dropped into two staples. Like fleeting shadows they tiptoed to the door, pushed it shut, shot the bar into the staples.

"Come on. We'll take their team." As they drove off they heard shouts and oaths from the stable.

"Howl, you dogs!" yelled René back at them. "You'll take some time breaking down the door."

Arrived at the wagon they loaded the bran sacks into Crossley's wagon and were away.

As they entered the village of Queenstown they slowed their foaming horses to a sedate trot and drew up in Mr. Hamilton's stable yard without mishap.

"Mr. Hamilton in?" inquired René of a young man, busy with a lantern in his hand.

"An' what wad ye be wantin' o' Maister Hamilton?" inquired the young man, throwing his light upon the boy's face.

"I have a letter for him."

"Hand me the letter, then."

"No!"

Black Hawk meantime, slipping down from the load, had come from behind the wagon into the light, his dark face with its gleaming black eyes only a few inches from the young man's face.

"Noo, whatna deevil——"

"See boss!" grunted the Indian, gripping the young man's arm.

There was a wild yell.

"Ouch! Man! Let be, wull ye?"

"McCloy! What's all the uproar about?" said a little man, coming out from the back of the store. "Come awa' an' get——"

"Come awa' yersel', Mr. Adam, an' see hoo ye like it," cried McCloy, jerking himself free and rubbing his arm.

"Hey, what's this? Who are ye, boy? An' what want ye here?" said Mr. Adam, holding up the lantern to René's face.

"I have a letter for Mr. Hamilton," said René.

"Gie it me, I am Maister Hamilton's bookkeeper."

"No, I was to give it to Mr. Hamilton."

"Huts! Gie it me, I'm tellin' ye."

At this Black Hawk's face came into the light, his black eyes agleam.

"See boss!" he said, pushing his face close to Mr. Adam's.

"Guid preserve us! What's yon?" cried Mr. Adam making for the door followed closely by Black Hawk.

"Hey! Keep oot, ye black devil! Keep oot o' this or I'll brak' ye're heid till ye!" cried Mr. Adam, catching up an ax handle.

"Mr. Adam! Mr. Adam! What does this mean?" said a gentleman, coming out hurriedly from an office at the back of the store. "Why all this unseemly noise?"

"If ye can tell me, ye may!" said Mr. Adam in high wrath. "Yon black devil——"

"Mr. Adam! Mr. Adam! How often——"

"Wull ye look at him an'——"

"Mr. Adam! Mr. Adam! please——"

"I have a letter here for Mr. Hamilton from Mr. MacPherson of the *Blue Bell,*" said René, coming in at the door.

"From Mr. MacPherson of the *Blue Bell?* Come in here, lad," said Mr. Hamilton drawing René into the office and closing the door carefully behind him. He took the letter and read it carefully, looked keenly into René's face.

"Are you——? Did Mr. MacPherson intrust—have you anything——?"

"It's out in the yard, sir."

"Hush! Come with me," said Mr. Hamilton, passing quickly out of the office.

"Mr. Adam, the lantern. No, you need not come."

"You will be needin'——"

"Mr. Adam, the lantern. No, you need not come."

"But, sir, the wagon is full."

"Mr. Adam! Mr. Adam! Did you hear——?"

"You will be——"

"Go back in about your business, sir, at once!" thundered Mr. Hamilton. "Come, boy."

Mr. Adam departed, grumbling.

Mr. Hamilton examined the load carefully.

"Is this all, boy?"

René told his tale.

"And the sacks of bran, boy? Are these all?"

"All but one which Crossley has in the stable."

Mr. Hamilton smiled gently. "Very good, very good, my lad."

"McCloy! McCloy."

McCloy appeared out of the darkness.

"Take Tom with you, a team and wagon, and go back the River Road till you come to a broken wagon. Tell him about it, lad."

René explained the matter fully.

Without a word McCloy went about his business.

"Now then, lad, we will carry these bran sacks into the cellar."

"Shall I call Mr. Adam, sir?"

"No, Mr. Adam is—we do not require Mr. Adam."

Carefully, almost cautiously, the three, Mr. Hamilton, René, and Black Hawk, carried the bran sacks down into the cellar and there in a separate and locked compartment safely deposited them.

"Now then, boy," said Mr. Hamilton, when he had got René and Black Hawk into his office, "you are—let me see—" he glanced at MacPherson's letter—"Sergeant Major Ross's son?"

"Nephew, sir."

"Ay, nephew—well, the Sergeant is to be trusted—but—well, boy, it would be as well that you should forget all that happened this afternoon."

"Crossley, sir? He struck Black Hawk over the face with his whip stalk. He has only one hand, sir."

"Brute! Still, the Indian is not to touch him. I'll attend to Crossley."

René smiled.

"But I mean it, boy! I mean it! Come away here." He led them into the store. "Tell your Indian he is to forget this man," said Mr. Hamilton, handing Black Hawk almost half a yard of black twist tobacco.

Black Hawk's face remained rigid. Mr. Hamilton added a powder horn filled with powder and a bag of bullets. "He is not to touch the man Crossley," repeated Mr. Hamilton. Still Black Hawk's face remained like stone. Mr. Hamilton added a couple of pounds of candy and a like amount of raisins.

Black Hawk's face relaxed in a slight grin. He muttered something in his own Mohawk.

"He says he has a bad memory. He can remember nothing that happened this afternoon," explained René.

"Good," said Mr. Hamilton, adding a pound of snuff. "And you, boy—for your work take this, and for your wagon—that will be put right. And, boy, do you wish to freight for me?"

René nodded.

"Come here to-morrow."

And this was the beginning of René's association with the Honorable Robert Hamilton, an association which was to be of great moment to both in the days to come.

CHAPTER II

BLUE EYES AND BLACK

"THIS is the way, I think," said the little girl with blue eyes and fair hair and sunbrowned face.

"You think, but you don't know. That way leads right down into the swamp." The girl with the blue-black hair, black eyes, and ivory skin was severely critical.

"Well, there is the sun going down, and so that's west, anyway," said blue eyes.

"Yes, it's west right enough, but where's home?" inquired black eyes.

"I don't—don't—don't really know. Oh! I wish there hadn't been so many nuts and that we hadn't come so far. I know we followed the ridge round, and there's the swamp, so we can go back by the ridge or through the swamp."

"But where's your house?" inquired black eyes sharply. "Now don't start crying, Nell. That won't do any good."

"I'm not—not—crying, Charlotte. You needn't be so cross."

"I'm not cross, but I would be ashamed to get lost in my own woods."

"This is not our woods. We left our woods long ago. There's the swamp."

"Nell Burch, if you tell me where that swamp is again I'll slap you. Where's your house? That's the question. The swamp lies north of your house, doesn't it?"

"Yes, and east too," replied Nell.

"East too? Then we must go west or south, so I say let's go southwest. There's the sun going down, so that must be west and this southwest. But——"

"Wow—wow—g-r-r-r-ow!"

"It's a dog," whispered Nell.

"Of course it's a dog," said Charlotte in a low tone, "but whose?"

Out of the cedar underbrush stepped a boy, seemingly about fifteen, gun in hand. Tall he was, with thin dark face, fierce black eyes, and extraordinarily handsome.

"Indian," whispered Nell, shrinking toward her friend.

"Here, Tige!" called the boy. "Come here!" The dog ran to him and stood at his side growling.

"He is no Indian," said Charlotte, scanning the boy.

Motionless, he stood straight as an Indian and as dark, in buckskin breeches and shirt.

"Who are you, boy?" said Charlotte.

The boy stood still, silent, gazing at her in a kind of maze.

"Who are you? Why don't you speak?" sharply again asked Charlotte.

"We are lost," said Nell. "We don't know our way home."

"Lost?" echoed the boy, surprise and scorn in his face. "Lost? However did you get lost?"

"Oh! I know him," whispered Nell to her friend. Then to the boy: "You're Sergeant Ross's boy. I'm Nell Burch. I live at the mill, you know."

"The mill!" shouted the boy, coming swiftly toward her. "Burch's girl, you are! I know you! I know your father! He's a liar, he is! Called me a thief!" he boy stood panting in front of her, his eyes ablaze with rage. "Some day I'll—I'll—I'll kill him. He beat me last year! He couldn't do it now! Wait you! As sure as God's in heaven I'll pay him back some day." The boy's face was distorted with passion.

Nell stood shrinking from him, white, trembling, near to tears.

"You're a brave boy, you are. Frightening a girl. My, what a brave boy!" Charlotte's voice rang forth scorn unutterable.

The boy turned his eyes upon her. A quick shame rose in them, then wonder and grudging admiration. "Come on, Tige!" he ordered, and turned away to the cedars.

"Boy! Come back here at once!' cried Charlotte.

The boy paused, half turned in his tracks, and stood looking at her.

"We are last," said the girl. "Tell us where the mill is."

The boy looked at her with a gleam of satisfaction. "Where it always is," he said with a grin.

"Smart, aren't you? Mean old thing to frighten two girls!"

The boy still grinned at her.

"Well, where's the mill?" demanded Charlotte again in a stern voice.

"Over yonder," replied the boy, waving his hand toward the swamp generally. "It is three miles or so, and the wolves are out."

"Wolves!" said Nell faintly.

"Wolves!" echoed Charlotte. They had been born in this wild land and knew all the terrors of the forest. Of all terrors, most feared were the wolves.

"Yes! I heard one a little ago." The boy was obviously enjoying himself.

"How do we get to the mill?" asked Charlotte, her voice trembling in spite of her brave front.

"Through the swamp there, three miles, or round the ridge, four miles. It'll be dark before you get home."

"Oh, boy!" said Nell, tears in her eyes and voice. "I'm awful sorry my pa called you a thief. Won't you please show us the way?"

The boy whirled swiftly upon the other girl. "Do you think I'm a thief?" he demanded.

"No," said Charlotte promptly, "you don't look like a thief. But I think you are a coward not to help two little girls that are lost in the woods."

Again the boy stood silent, his eyes fixed upon her face, "I'm not a thief," he began in a low, intense voice. "I was going to the mill. I found a lot of eggs in the bushes near their barn. I was taking them to the house. His dog came at me, I kicked him, and the eggs fell and smashed. Then he caught me and shook me, and he called me—called me—" the boy's teeth were snapping his words off one by one—"he called me a thief—yes, and he beat me!" His rage choked his words. "You tell your father," he cried, turning upon Nell, "that some day I'll get even with him. Next year I'll be sixteen, and I'll pound the liver out of him. You tell him that, do you hear?" The boy was beside himself with fury.

"No, she will not," replied Charlotte, stepping toward him.

"Nice sort of thing to ask a girl to do!" Her voice carried indignation, but in it was also an undertone of sympathy. "You tell him yourself, if you want him to know. It was a shame, a beastly shame, to do what he did. But it isn't Nell's fault, is it?"

Instantly the boy's face changed. He had caught the note of sympathy in her voice. He saw pity shining in her eyes. His lips trembled, his face flushed a deep red. He tried to speak, failed, turned abruptly away. "Come on," he said curtly, "I'm takin' you home. You'll have to hurry, too. Gimme that bag," he said to Nell, pointing to the bag of nuts lying at her feet. "Gimme that bag!"

"You've got your gun," said Nell faintly.

"Gimme that bag!" he ordered her. "I can carry it." He took it from her, tied it to his belt, and set off on a dog trot.

The path for the first few moments led through wide open woods where there was but little underbrush. After a few minutes the boy turned into the swamp, and almost immediately his feet were upon a well-beaten trail. Here the underbrush grew thick. The sun had gone down below the treetops, and dark shadows were beginning to fill the spaces between the trees. Never faltering, the boy turned, twisted, glided, silent as a hound slipping through the brush. Again and again he was forced to wait for the girls, who came panting behind him. They were familiar with the woods, and long-distance running was no new thing to them. But this pace was too much for them! They were halfway through the swamp when a long faint howl sounded far away in the forest.

"Oh! Did you hear that?" said Nell, her voice shaking with fear. "Was that a wolf?"

"Pshaw!" said the boy in scorn. "What do we care for him? Let him come on. I'll take his hide off of him."

The girls set off again at a great pace.

"Here!" said the boy. "No use running like that. You can't run faster than the wolf, anyway. What's the use of getting scared?"

"Aren't you scared?" inquired Charlotte.

"No," he said. "I've hunted wolves."

The girl's eyes gleamed with admiration.

"You aren't a bit afraid?" she asked, as the boy slowed down to a walk.

He stood still and turned to her. "I'm not afraid of one wolf," he said, "so long as I've got my gun. A pack of wolves, that is different. But that's no pack. Come on, let's go, but there's no use running too hard."

In due time the little path led them to a well-beaten road winding through the forest. "That's your road," said the boy. "You are about a mile from home, perhaps a little more."

"But the wolf!" said Nell in an anxious voice. Charlotte said nothing.

"Are you afraid?" said the boy, turning to her.

No reply. Charlotte, her head going up, said, "Come on, Nell." But Nell stood looking at the boy. Again came the long howl, this time sounding somewhat nearer.

"All right, come on," said the boy, making no effort to conceal his contempt, and he set off once more on his tireless trot. In a few minutes they came to a fence about a pasture, filled with stumps and tumbled logs. Through the few remaining trees of the *brûlé* lights could be seen. "That's your place," said the boy, untying the bag of nuts and handing it to Nell.

"Oh! Thank you! Thank you!" said Nell, taking the bag. "It's awful good of you, and, oh! I'm awful sorry!" The nervous strain of the last hour and a half was too much for her. She burst into tears and sobbed pitifully. "I'm—awful—sorry—that Pa—said that," she sobbed.

"Never you mind!" said the boy. "I'm not mad at you. But he's a liar, and I am going to get even with him."

"Good-bye, boy," said Charlotte, moving toward him. "Thank you for taking us home." As she offered him her hand her face was illumined with a radiant smile.

"Oh, pshaw!" said the boy, a shy smile breaking over his thin, dark face as he took her hand. "That's nothing. I meant to come all the time, anyway."

Again came the long howl from the swamp, this time still nearer.

"Oh, listen to that!" said Nell. "You mustn't go home alone. Come with us, and Ben will go with you."

"Go with me? Not if I know it."

"But the wolf! That's a wolf howling," said Nell.

"Yah! Let him howl. I'm going straight back the way we came. If he comes after me I'll take his hide." He picked up the gun and called to his dog and set off toward the swamp.

"Boy!" called Charlotte.

He turned, came back to her, his eyes gleaming with a soft, eager look.

"What's your name, boy?"

"René," he said.

"Rainy," she said with a brilliant smile, "that's a funny name."

"No, René," he replied, his head going up. "My father's name."

"Sergeant Ross is your father," said Nell with hesitation.

"No!" Again the boy's head went up. "My father was a French officer from France. He fought against the British. He's dead." The boy's voice softened. "Dead a long time ago."

"Oh!" exclaimed both the girls, drawing nearer to him, their eyes full of sympathy.

"I'm sorry," said Charlotte. "Good-bye." Again she offered him her hand.

The boy flushed a quick hot flush, stepped shyly to her, took her hand in his, and bowed over it like a prince.

"Good-bye," he said, and, ignoring Nell, turned and disappeared among the bushes.

"Good-bye," cried Nell after him, but there was no reply.

"He just hates me," said the girl, "because of Pa."

"Who is he? Where does he live? Isn't he splendid?" asked Charlotte breathlessly.

"I don't know," replied the girl, "except that he lives with Sergeant Ross over in Township Three near Twelve Mile Creek. It's a long way off. Oh! I wish he had someone with him. The wolves are out."

"He's all right. He isn't afraid of wolves," replied Charlotte. "I believe he'll just kill that wolf. Let's run home and tell your pa, anyway." They set off at a racing pace through the *brûlé*. Over the fence, up the long lane through the barn yard without a stop they ran, and burst breathless upon their startled family. There, together and singly, they poured forth their story to

eager listeners. Even Ben Burch, a big seventeen-year-old fellow, was interested.

"He's gone back through the swamp, eh?" asked Ben.

"Yes. He said he was going the way we came, along the concession, then through the swamp."

"Oh, he'll be all right," said Ben. "He had a gun and a dog." But he and his father stepped together out of the house.

The afterglow of the sunset was still in the sky, but night was fast drawing on, and the woods were full of dark shadows.

"The sergeant's house is six miles from here," said the father. "How old is that boy?"

"Fourteen or so, but he has a gun."

"Fourteen? I don't like it," said the father. "The wolves are beginning to run. I heard one in the swamp to-day."

"So did I," said Ben, "but he'll be safe enough." There was that in his voice, however, that decided his father's course.

"Saddle up Gray," said his father. "I'll ride to the sergeant's and make sure that he gets home, eh?"

"All right, Father," said Ben, going toward the stable.

In a few minutes his father came out from the house carrying a rifle with him. He found Ben mounted upon the gray horse. "Let me have your gun, Dad."

"No!" said his father. "I'll go myself. I must see that boy."

"Not much! No need of your going." He took the gun from his father's hand and was about to set off. "Wait, Ben," said his father. "I'll saddle Bess. You'll ride by the concession and the lake road to the sergeant's, and I'll take the bridle path through the swamp and over the ridge."

In an hour's time the miller was knocking at the door of Sergeant Major Ross's house. A little neat log house it was, cosy and well kept. The garden and orchard and stables were neat like the house, as indeed were fitting in the possessions of a sergeant major of a world-famous Highland regiment, the Black Watch.

"Has your boy come home?" inquired the miller of the sergeant major standing in the light of his open door.

"What has he been doing now?"

"Nothing, nothing at all. Only that he found my girls lost in the woods to-night and brought them home. And besides, I

heard to-day from my girls another side to the story of the eggs —I called him a liar and switched him. I'm afraid he is not—I mean—I believe he is not."

"I know he is not."

"But you thrashed him that day as well."

"Yes, not for lying, but for impudence and profanity."

Upon which the miller broke forth in wild speech.

"Step in, sir," interrupted the sergeant. "I allow no profanity in my house."

"But—but—" sputtered the miller—"I called him a liar, a thief. I believe him now to be neither—where does that leave me? Where is the boy?"

But the sergeant knew not. "In the woods somewhere."

"Sergeant, my boy says the wolves are running. The boy left my house to cross the swamp an hour and a half ago."

The sergeant stepped into his house and returned with a rifle in his hands.

"There is no fear of the boy," he said, "but I will be stepping down to the Four Mile. He will be coming that way."

Whereupon the miller tied up Bess in the stable, and the two set forth, taking the back trail to the Four Mile Creek where it crosses the concession line. Traveling along the concession, they met Ben.

"Have you seen him?" asked Burch.

"Not a sign. I have been through all the swamp. I heard a shot an hour ago, but not a sign or sound since."

"I don't like it," said the miller.

"I am not afeared for him," said the sergeant. "He is like an Indian in the woods. Indeed, he will be spending far too much of his time with them. They will be making a lot of him, and Cutnose himself was telling me that not a man of them can beat him at the traps. He will not stay at his books. I set him a stent but he is through with it and away with them again. And wheeping will not turn him from them. But I am talking too much."

"How old is he?" asked Ben. "Fourteen?"

"Feefteen he is, but tall enough for seventeen. But his mother was tall before him and, like him, afeared of nothing, What you will be calling a heroine, a rale heroine. She married a French

officer. He was a great soldier indeed. He fought under Montcalm as a youth and against us in the American War. Ay, a gallant soldier and with a tongue that would wile the birds from the trees, but such a liar as never was. The boy is like his mother. He will tell the truth. But I am talking too much."

"Dad, you take Bess. Ride down the concession and round to the sergeant's. We will go along my back trail. We will be sure to pick him up."

When they arrived at the sergeant's house they found the miller at the door.

"Have you seen him?" inquired Ben.

"No, but look at this, will you?" replied the miller pointing at something lying across a sawhorse. Ben picked up a gory, messy skin.

"Great jumpin' Jeremiah! Where did you get that?"

"Right there. Saw it when I came here."

"Well, I'm danged!" said Ben. "What a whopper! Do you mean to say the boy killed that wolf?"

"I know nothing about it. Haven't seen him."

The sergeant went to the stable and called the boy's name. By a ladder from the loft he came slowly down.

"Come in!" said the sergeant opening the door. The men stepped into the house.

"Come in, laddie. We will be getting supper."

The boy disappeared into the room at the rear of the kitchen.

"Put on the fire, René," said the sergeant. "You will be stopping for supper, Mr. Burch."

"Sergeant Major, before supper and before anything else I have something to say to this boy. A year ago I charged him with being a liar and a thief and switched him——"

"You can't do it to-day!" The boy stood within striking distance of the man, his face pale, his black eyes gleaming with fury, his voice hoarse and quivering.

"René, be quiet, will you?" said the sergeant.

"No, nor do I want to. I was wrong that day. I am sorry for it. I want to apologize to you. I am downright sorry and ashamed." The man's voice was trembling. "I suppose you wouldn't shake hands with me?"

The boy stood back, his hands behind him, but on his face a look of wonder and uncertainty.

"René, this gentleman is apologizing to you. He is asking you to forgive him for what he did to you."

The boy threw a swift glance at the man's face, came forward slowly, and offered his hand.

"Boy, you are a real man, and you are a gentleman," said Mr. Burch, gripping the boy's hand. "I only hope to know you better."

But René was beyond speech. He turned away, struggling with his emotions.

"I say, René, where did you get that wolf?" asked Ben, creating a diversion.

"Easy enough," replied the boy gruffly. "He was tracking me. I gave him the wolf call a few times and dropped behind a bush. He came right on my gun, and I let him have it."

"Say, I want a good man to draw a bear's den with me next winter. Will you come along?"

The boy glanced kindly at him.

"Oh, I mean it all right. What do you say?"

"I'll come," said the boy with flashing eyes.

"I know where there's one."

The miller would not wait for supper, though the sergeant pressed him hard.

"Mother will be a bit anxious about us," said Ben. "Good-night, René, don't forget that bear."

After supper, when the sergeant was "taking the books," according to his usual custom, he chose with care the Psalm for the reading, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder. The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot." He read in a sonorous tone with a lilt of triumph in his voice. Before he knelt to pray he cleared his throat with a portentous "Ar-r-r-r u-u-m-ah, lad," he said. "You know I never thought you were a thief, nor a liar, you know that?"

René nodded, his wide open black eyes upon his uncle's face.

"You might have informed me of the circumstances, it would have saved you a sore wheeping and me, a-r-r-r-u-u-m-ah! a sore heart to-night."

Never had the sergeant shown any such emotion. The boy flung himself suddenly at his uncle's knees. "Oh! Uncle," he sobbed, "I was afraid—I'm awfully glad you didn't think me——"

His uncle put his hand on the black curly head. "No, no! René man. A-r-r-r-u-u-m-ah! You could not do a dishonest thing, nor could you tell a falsehood and, A-r-r-r-u-u-m-ah! as God lives! yon will be the last wheeping you will get from me whateffer. You have shown yourself a man this night. Let us pray."

CHAPTER III

THE BROOKES MANOR HOUSE

"Let them go, Jabez."

The hostler of Hinds's Hotel released the bays, who, after serious gyrations upon their hind legs, were away up the main street of Niagara at a clipping pace under the steady hands of Colonel Brookes.

"Let me have them, Papa. Do, please."

"Not yet, Charlotte. Wait till we are on the River Road. They feel their oats a bit too much. Whoa there, Prince! Steady boy!"

A couple of miles on the River Road, and Charlotte again begged for the reins.

"Well, easy on their mouths, Charlotte," said the colonel, passing the rains to his daughter. Immediately sensitive to the new touch on the reins, they were away at a gallop.

"Steady, girl. Don't pull so. No! No! You are fretting them. Let me show you." He took the reins and soon had them at a steady trot.

"See! Firm and gentle. If they spring, don't pull sharply. Let them have their heads. Try 'em again. Show them you are not afraid of them."

Once more Charlotte took the reins. Again the bays were away. But this time the girl allowed them their heads, speaking quietly and gradually increasing the pull on the reins, with the result that soon the bays came back to a steady pace.

"Fine! Now watch this team. Oxen are so uncertain. Shall I take them?"

"Don't you dare, Papa," she cried joyously. The oxen were slow to give the road, forcing the bays to the edge of the road. Nervously they began prancing high upon their toes. The girl threw her weight on the reins. Immediately there was a quick swerve to the side. The outer wheels sank deep into the soft soil,

the democrat gave a sudden lurch. The colonel's hands moved toward the reins.

"Hands off! I've got them!" Her laugh rang out gayly. "I'm letting them have their heads." She was indeed. Eight hoofs were doing a snare drum on the road, the bays running low with necks outstretched. The colonel sat grimly alert.

"You've got 'em, my girl! By Jove, you've got 'em," he said below his breath. "Well played, little girl! You'll do."

"That's that boy," said Charlotte, her cheeks aflame.

"What boy?"

"The boy that brought me—brought us home last fall. Sergeant Ross's boy."

"Oh! The boy that got the wolf?" The colonel turned to look back.

"Don't look, Papa. He'll think we're talking about him," said his daughter.

"What difference if he does?"

"No difference at all," said the girl, her head and her color a little higher.

They were nearing their own gate. The bays, smelling their oats, and encouraged by the colonel, who loved to draw up with a flourish, always made it a point to take the sweep of the balsam-lined drive at top speed.

"Better let me take 'em in, Charlotte. The turn is rather sharp."

"Never!" cried the girl, her little arms taut on the quivering ribbons as the bays swept with hoofs snare-drumming up the hard-beaten drive to the front door.

"There! I guess I can take 'em out myself now, Papa," cried Charlotte, leaping down from her seat.

"Listen to the chit!" exclaimed her father. "How old do you think you are, baby?"

"Going on fifteen, Papa," she said rubbing her horses' noses.

"Nonsense child!"

"Going on fifteen, Papa," she said again gravely.

"By Jove! You are quite a young woman, eh?"

The Brookes Manor House was built of hewn logs, the original structure of fifteen by twenty feet being enlarged to twice its former length with the addition of a second story adorned with

dormer windows. About three sides of the house ran a wide veranda decked with climbing roses. The house stood in a grove of maple, elm, chestnut, and walnut trees, the splendid survivals of a noble primeval forest. At one side of the house were orchards of peach and pear trees, introduced from old France by Frontenac's officers, and apple trees brought from Pennsylvania. At the other side was a garden filled with old-fashioned English flowers, which, through a vine-covered gateway, led into a spacious vegetable garden. Both gardens and orchards were enclosed by a tall thick hedge of French thorn, also introduced, it was said, by Frontenac's officers. Beyond the garden were pasture fields, in which grazed Colonel Brookes's horses and cattle, prize winners at the recently organized Agricultural and Commercial Association's annual fair. Beyond the pasture fields were the grain fields, now lying shorn of their summer crop and already being put under the plow for next year. At the horizon in the distance stood the dark, solid walls of the unbroken forest, the home still of the wild things that had once roamed and ruled its trackless fastnesses.

The house and its environs were the pride and joy of the colonel's heart. For though he had never known the struggle with poverty that had been the lot of most of the pioneers of the district, his house and homestead represented twenty years of privation, loneliness, and strenuous toil on the part of his lady wife and himself. In the latter years, it is true, his two sturdy sons had done their full share of the work upon the farm, but upon the colonel had rested the burden of clearing the land and transforming it from a wilderness to a home of beauty and comfort.

There were larger and finer houses along the River Road, and of course many grander in York, the capital, but none in the colony presented an appearance of greater dignity and comfort, and none were more famed for a cultured and generous hospitality, than the Brookes Manor House.

At the door stood the colonel's lady, tall, stately, her pale lovely face framed in soft waves of silvery brown hair.

"Oh, Mamma," cried the girl, "we have had a glorious drive! I took them almost all the way. And we nearly upset and——"

"My dear! Do you think it quite safe to allow the child——"

"Child, my dear!" replied the colonel. "Do you realize that she is nearly fifteen? She is a young woman!"

"Well, hardly." The mother smiled down into the dark little face, still pale, but touched with red from the excitement of her drive.

"And we passed René, Mamma," said the girl in a low tone—the colonel being busy with his bays. "He is a lot bigger, Mamma, and better looking too. He was driving the oxen with the sergeant. I wish we could see him again."

The dark eyes were looking far down the road with something new in the look.

"Oh, some day," said the mother lightly, "we will have him over for dinner."

"When, Mamma?"

"Some day. Run away now and tidy yourself."

"This week, Mamma?"

"My dear child surely there is no great hurry. Some day we will ask Nell to come, and then we can have him over."

"Do we want Nell? Why not——"

"Run away, Charlotte. You will be late. Here comes your father."

But the boy was to be invited to dinner much sooner than either of them knew. For after the colonel had removed the stains of travel, and as he was relating to his wife his experience of the afternoon in the town, the maid announced "Sergeant Major Ross to see the master."

"Show him in at once," said the colonel. "My dear, we shall ask Sergeant Ross to dinner. A fine fellow! A man of character! A thorough gentleman at heart, if not altogether in dress and manners."

"There is nothing wrong with either dress or manners as far as I can see," said his wife.

The sergeant appeared at the door, clicked his heels in salute to the colonel and bowed low to the colonel's wife.

"Come in, Sergeant. Come away in," said the colonel heartily. "Sit down, sir. Take this seat. No this seat is better."

With the rigid dignity of his training the sergeant took the seat indicated.

"We are glad to see you, Sergeant," said Mrs. Brookes. "You will do us the honor of taking dinner with us."

"I was not thinking of such a thing. I am not prepared for that," said the sergeant.

"Tut, tut!" said the colonel. "What preparation do you need but a good appetite?"

"And besides," added the sergeant, "the lad is with me."

"Oh! your nephew? I am so glad, Sergeant," said Mrs. Brookes, "I want very much to see him."

"Thank you, ma'am. Indeed, you are very kind," replied the sergeant, rising to his feet and bowing low to the lady.

"My dear," said the colonel, "you will give orders that the sergeant's team and the boy are cared for. Now, then, Sergeant."

"You will pardon my intrusion, Colonel," the sergeant began at once.

"Intrusion? Not at all. It is never an intrusion for an old neighbor to call upon me."

"But you will not be liking my errand, sir."

"At any rate, it will be the errand of an honest man," replied the colonel warmly.

"I will be telling you no lies whateffer," answered the sergeant. "It is about my land. It will be about ten years ago that I was promised five hundred of a grant. I made my selection and began to work. I have cleared about one hundred and fifty acres and have made a living. I have never got my title from the government, indeed, I never bothered myself about a title. It has been hard work for myself alone. I have had debts to pay, not my own, but, if you will excuse me, my sister's. I mean the boy's father's."

"I understand, Sergeant," said the colonel kindly. "It does you great credit."

"A few months ago I was wanting to raise some money. I was wanting to give the boy a chance for an education, and I was going to sell two hundred acres of the land. I am offered a good price for it. I went to the land agent and was informed that I have no title, that there are some dues and costs and what not, amounting to some hundreds of dollars; and if these are not paid I may lose my land altogether."

"Nonsense, Sergeant," said the colonel warmly. "Lose your land? Absurd!"

"But the young man in the office was telling me that, and he shut the door in my face. I don't mind so much paying the money, but I am a British subject, and I have served my king with the colors, and injustice I will not abide, nor will I stand to be insulted by any whipper-snapper like yon."

"You are right, Sergeant. Injustice you shall not suffer. There must be some mistake. I will see about it at once. Rest assured this will be rectified. Ah! there is my son Hubert. He may know something about this. Hubert, this way, please."

His son came into the room, bowed to the sergeant, who bowed in return, but not with a military salute. This he reserved for his superior officer. The young man was slender, tall, with the build of an athlete. His thin dark face, however, was the face of a student.

"He is not yet a full-fledged lawyer," said the colonel to the sergeant, "but he is on his way, and these things now and then engage his attention."

"I have heard of the young man, sir," replied the sergeant, "and nothing to his discredit."

"Now, Hubert, what about it?" said the colonel, after putting the sergeant's case before him.

"Well, sir, I have heard of this sort of thing before," said the young man. "In fact, there is quite a row on at this present time over these soldiers' grants. There have been all sorts of delays in the matter of title, cancelations have occurred, and large numbers of soldiers have been induced to sell out their holdings at very low figures. One soldier I know sold his land for a few shillings an acre, another exchanged one hundred acres for a cow, another one hundred and fifty acres for a few gallons of rum."

"That is outrageous," said the colonel. "But surely it is their own fault. These must be stupid, worthless fellows."

"Some of them are," replied the son, "but the delays in securing title, the needless difficulties put in the way of the applicants, and in some cases their own improvidence, I grant you, have combined to deprive many of them of their land, or have induced them to sell at wretchedly low figures."

"But does the government know this? Can the government be held responsible for this?"

"In many cases, yes. Often the government clerks are the advisors and abettors in these transactions. The bearing of some of these young fellows in the government offices is often intolerable. I have with difficulty kept my hands off them at times. They hold their office by virtue of influence, they neglect their duties, they take advantage of their inside knowledge and of their opportunities to sell choice lands to favorites. They arrange bargains for their friends. Some of this, I acknowledge, is hearsay, Father, but I am not altogether without authority for my statements. This very week the mail from the West brings me a copy of a document in which these and other grievances are set forth in a memorandum from the Grand Jury of the London District. I have it right here."

The colonel took the document from his son's hand and glanced at it hurriedly. "Ah! Judge Thorp's name I see here. That is enough for me. An Irish revolutionary, and doubtless this document is nothing more than a pack of lies presented by the unscrupulous demagogues, Irish rebels and Yankee agitators, that make up Judge Thorpe's following." The colonel, with blazing wrath, was striding up and down the room.

"I beg to disagree, sir," said the sergeant, rising from his chair.

"Scoundrels, sir!" shouted the colonel.

"I am one of them, sir!" replied the sergeant.

"You? No! no! Sergeant. I assure you I had no thought of classifying you for an instant with these rascals. I would not so insult you, Sergeant."

"But, sir, I will maintain," replied the sergeant with great dignity, "I will maintain with Mr. Hubert here, that many of my comrades, some of them men of my old battalion, have suffered similar wrongs to my own. I am not an agitator nor a rebel, nor do I take any part in such work, and that is why I am here to-night, and that is why I am asking your assistance, Colonel."

"Have you any papers, Sergeant?" inquired Hubert.

"Not many, sir, but here are what papers I have," replied the sergeant, drawing from his pocket a large blue envelope and offering it to the colonel.

"Hubert, you will take these papers of Sergeant Ross," said the colonel. "Look into them, and, Hubert, remember you will consider this as a private affair with the sergeant and myself."

"Certainly, sir, I understand," said Hubert. "Perhaps Sergeant Ross will go over these with me now."

"I will that, with the colonel's permission," replied the sergeant.

"Very well, Sergeant, you will excuse me for a few minutes. I will leave you for the present in my son's care."

The colonel left the room more disturbed in mind than he cared to acknowledge. It disturbed him that the government which he loyally supported should in any way be associated with such injustice as that which the sergeant had suffered. It disturbed him also to discover that his son appeared to be in possession of such full knowledge of the government's alleged misdeeds, and appeared to be in sympathy with those who were ready to charge the government with grave misdemeanors.

The colonel found his way into the garden, his refuge in times of extreme excitement or annoyance. Here, amid his fruits and flowers, he found an anodyne to painful emotion. Here he was in the atmosphere of truth. Here he could be sure of an honest response to honest effort, of honest reward to honest toil; but even here, this afternoon, in this environment of truth and beauty he came upon an element of disturbance to his peace of mind. Sauntering down a garden path hedged by high currant bushes and pausing at an opening in the hedge his eyes fell upon two figures in a remote corner of his orchard partly sheltered by the thick foliage of heavily laden pear trees. He took a step or two forward, and there, to his amazement, he saw his daughter Charlotte standing with hands pressed upon her young breasts, her cheeks aflame, her eyes aglow, and before her upon his knees a youth upon whose dark upturned face and in whose black eyes flew every signal of intense and consuming passion. The colonel's first impulse was toward laughter, the thing was so absurd, so childishly silly. Something in the girl's face checked him. "Going on fifteen," she had said that very afternoon. Girls in the colony had been married at sixteen. And seventeen was recognized as quite a marriageable age. But Charlotte! His little child! His

baby girl! Made love to by—— Who was the boy, anyway? Ah! The sergeant's nephew, of course.

He remembered the wolf incident of a year ago. That boy! Yes, he was sixteen and, by reports, with many of the qualities of a grown man. Like lightning flashes these thoughts passed through the colonel's mind and held him transfixed. His eyes traveled from his girl's face to that of the lad upon his knees. Handsome enough the young devil looked, his dark face illumined with the glow of his passion. A sudden fury possessed the colonel. How dared this youth, the son of a derelict French officer, make love to his girl? His father was a gentleman of Old France, it is true, and his mother a Highland Scot, good blood enough! But for his daughter? He had other and far higher ambitions for her than that she should marry some colonial. What would the girl's mother say? Ah! that thought recalled him, brought him relief. Her mother would deal with this nonsense. The colonel slid back beyond the bushes and made his way to the house. Forgotten were the sergeant and his wrongs. Forgotten for the moment the political problems of his country. The danger to which his little girl was exposed filled him with fear, with dismay. Being made love to! After all, the thing was absurd. He laughed aloud at himself and his fears. On second thought, he would say nothing of this to his wife. But in his heart he knew that in the end he would tell all that he had seen and all that he feared.

CHAPTER IV

DEPARTMENTAL ETHICS

THE colonel spent the next half hour before dinner examining Hubert's precious document from the West. As he read his wrath rose to boiling heat.

The Grand Jury presentment set forth in detail a list of grievances for the consideration of Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore, newly arrived in the colony. The list was formidable enough. According to the document, the traffic in public lands by government officials had become notorious and scandalous.

The ordinary land grant to settlers was two hundred acres. Such was the prodigality of the administration, however, that members of the Executive Council received five thousand acres each, with twelve hundred acres to each of their children. Favorite members of the Legislative Council and their children also received similar generous consideration. In one instance the generosity of the administration appears to have reached its climax in the grant of twelve hundred acres to a three-day-old infant child of a popular member of the council. Instances were cited of grants to servants and dependants of friends of the Government party which were later transferred to these friends and their children.

Ex-soldiers too had their grievances. Promises of land grants made to them years before were in some cases unfulfilled. In other cases where grants had been made patents could not be secured. These huge grants of land to government favorites could be selected by the grantees at will, throughout the province. The results were disastrous to the extension of settlement and to the establishment of settlers in their rights and privileges as citizens. These huge areas of land remaining unoccupied, uncultivated, became a hindrance to the settlement of the country. Their owners paid no taxes, assumed no responsibilities for the exten-

sion of roads, for the building of schools, mills, and other such conveniences necessary to the wellbeing of the settlers.

Many of the bona fide settlers were half-pay officers, often unskilled in meeting the demands of pioneer life. Remote from neighbors, from markets, from schools and churches, they grew discouraged, abandoned their holdings, and in despair sold out their two-hundred-acre grants for a few shillings. In one case cited a half-pay officer had sold his two-hundred-acre lot for a couple of pounds, in another case the lot was sold for a cow, and in another for a few gallons of rum.

Had it not been that Judge Thorpe's name was associated with the document, the indignation of the colonel at the recital of grievances would have exceeded all bounds, but the fact that the document had been presented by the Grand Jury to the "radical" judge was sufficient to prejudice the colonel's mind against all the statements which it contained. His innate sense of justice, however, gave him an uneasy mind and awakened a determination to secure a fuller acquaintance with the facts.

He was still in a state of confusion and indignation when he was summoned to dinner. He had no sooner seated himself at the table than he at once began to open up the subject of the sergeant's grievances.

"Well, Hubert," he said to his son, "what have you found?"

"The matter will require further investigation, sir," replied his son, "but I have almost come to the opinion that the delay experienced by Sergeant Ross in securing his title and the heaping up of costs is only another instance of the grievances which you will find set forth in the document which I handed to you."

"A document," said the colonel, with a distinct snort of indignation, "which I consider both libelous and seditious."

"Libelous?" asked Hubert.

"Yes, sir, libelous! I do not refer to the matter of land grants so much. There doubtless are instances of delays, as there are many instances of failure and dissatisfaction on the part of settlers, due, I am bound to say, however, in many cases that I have known, to their own inefficiency and inability to meet the demands of pioneer life. But in this document there is a distinct charge of corruption against the officials of the Indian Department.

Now we all know that Mr. William Claus, at the head of the department, is a member of the Legislative Assembly and a gentleman whose integrity cannot be impugned."

"And yet, Father," said his son, "there is no department of the administration that is so notoriously corrupt as the Indian Department. I am not accusing Mr. Claus himself, but there are enormous sums of money passing through that department, and it is common knowledge that the agents and sub-agents of the department make a very good thing out of their distribution."

"The Indians certainly have no good word for the department," said Edward, the colonel's second son. "I come across them a good deal in hunting and that sort of thing, and they have no good word for the Indian agents."

"The Indians!" cried the colonel. "A lazy lot of good-for-nothing fellows! They waste their time in hunting and trapping, allow their squaws to do all the work, while they loaf around spending their money foolishly and drinking bad whisky when they can get it."

"The Indians are cheated by the agents." It was René who spoke, in a voice calm, controlled, but vibrating with emotion.

The colonel looked at the boy in startled surprise. "Cheated?" he said.

"Yes, sir, cheated," said René, "of very large sums. These agents distribute every year sixty thousand pounds among the Indians."

"Sixty thousand pounds!" exclaimed the colonel. "What is your authority for such a statement?"

"The London *Times,* sir."

"The London *Times!* Do you read the London *Times?* Do you take the London *Times,* Sergeant?"

"No, sir," replied the sergeant. "But the boy has got it for the last two years. He pays for it with his furs, and the Boston *Herald* as well." The eyes of the family group were centered upon the boy's face with a new interest. That there should be a boy in the colony of sixteen years of age receiving weekly a copy of the London *Times* and the Boston *Herald* was an amazing thing.

"Sixty thousand pounds!" repeated the colonel.

"Yes, sir," replied the boy. "That is the statement made by the

Secretary of State in Parliament. Sixty thousand pounds in cash distributed among the Mississagas, Oneidas, Mohawks, Senecas, and some Far Western Indians. But the cash does not reach the Indians except in the case of some of the chiefs."

"Do you mean that distribution is made in commodities?" inquired the colonel.

"Yes, sir! And I have seen the commodities," continued René in growing excitement, "and I know the prices charged for them. Axes that break in pieces when you stick them into a hardwood maple tree on a frosty day. Red, purple, and blue cloth, spangles, beads, hand mirrors, and hundreds of things that are no use to an Indian or to anyone else, indeed." The boy's black eyes seemed to glint sparks of light. His voice took on a deeper tone. "They sell muskets, sir, that I could bend over my knee. They are dangerous guns, sir. They often explode. My best friend among the Indians, the young chief Black Hawk, lost a hand by the explosion of a new musket. He can hardly make a living. He is one of the Indians that spend their time about the tavern drinking and fighting except when they are in jail. The agents sell these things to the Indians at three times, four times, twenty times, a hundred times their cost." The boy was trembling with the intensity of his passion.

"A hundred times their cost!" exclaimed the colonel. "Absurd! These are extraordinary statements you are making. Are you sure of your facts?"

"I know that what I say is true," replied the boy, sitting up very straight.

"Can you verify these statements?"

The boy pushed his chair back from the table, looked steadily for some moments into the colonel's eyes, his face pale as ivory. "Sir, I know what I say is true. I have been present at these sales. I have seen the goods and the prices. I have compared them with the prices in Mr. Hamilton's store, and——"

"I have seen them too, Father," interrupted Edward. "I have been present at these distributions."

René ignored the interruption. "I know Black Hawk. He was a good Indian. I shall bring him to-morrow to you—to-morrow, before this hour."

"I don't want to see him," said the colonel.

"He will be here," replied René, rising from the table. "He is at the Big Forks of the Grand River."

"Why, that is thirty miles away, René," said Edward. "You can't——"

"He will be here to-morrow! I start now," said the boy, standing erect behind his chair.

"Tut-tut, boy! Sit down!" said the colonel.

"Finish your dinner, René," said Mrs. Brookes kindly. "There will be plenty of time to talk about this later." But the boy remained standing.

"René, you forget your manners," said his uncle gravely.

"I am speaking the truth," said the boy with sudden passion. "I will have Black Hawk here to-morrow. I am going." He bowed to Mrs. Brookes, bowed to the colonel, and turned to leave the room.

"René, wait! I have something to give you," cried Charlotte, starting from her seat. "Excuse me, Mamma."

"Charlotte, sit down!" said the colonel in a stern voice.

"Excuse me, Papa, just for a moment. I have something to give René."

"Come right back, then, Charlotte," said Mrs. Brookes, "and finish your dinner."

"Yes, Mamma, I shall be back in a moment," said the girl quietly.

The colonel looked at his little girl. She seemed to have grown since she had driven home beside him that afternoon. Her eyes were shining. Her cheeks burned red, but her voice was quite steady and composed. "Going on fifteen." The words flashed through the colonel's memory. She was no longer a child. She followed René from the room.

"You will excuse the boy, Colonel," said the sergeant. "He means nothing bad, but he has never spoken anything but the truth all his life long."

"Good heavens, I was not doubting his word!" cried the colonel. "I will call him back. He can never make that journey in the time."

"Let him go, Colonel. He can make the run, and he will. No

Indian can keep up with him. He is a queer lad and must just take his own way."

But the colonel was by no means satisfied. It hurt him to think that the boy should think that he doubted his word. He rose and hurried from the room. Through the hall, through the kitchen he went, but no trace of the boy or of his daughter did he find. Down the path leading from the kitchen, out to the driveway he went. As he entered the drive he heard the boy's voice in passionate declaration:

"I told the truth. I am no liar! I will make Black Hawk tell him to-morrow."

"Good-bye, René," came Charlotte's voice. "I know you would never never tell anything but the truth. Here, take this from me. It is—it is my picture."

The boy took the daguerreotype from her hand, looked at it a moment, put it in his buckskin shirt. Then he took her hand and, falling on his knees, kissed it passionately, the girl the while standing erect and proud as a young princess looking down with shining eyes upon the boy.

The colonel turned away from the scene, utterly beyond all power of speech. "Going on fifteen." This young thing standing so proudly there and receiving the homage of this extraordinary youth. No child was she. "Going on fifteen." She would be sixteen next year. His Charlotte! He swore a great and solemn oath. "She shall go to England this very year if I know my own mind!" "Going on fifteen."

CHAPTER V

BLACK HAWK

THAT night the colonel spent an unpleasant hour with his wife. He recounted the scenes which he had witnessed between Charlotte and the boy René. To his amazement his wife received his communications with a smile and refused to be disturbed.

"We must send her at once to England. She needs to be under discipline, to see something besides savages and frontiersmen in buckskin," said the colonel in high excitement.

"But, my dear, Charlotte is only a child. She is not fifteen yet."

"Fifteen!" snorted the colonel. "How old was that Servos girl who got married last year? Sixteen! I happen to know."

"But, my dear, there is a great difference between Margaret Servos and our Charlotte. Margaret is a girl with a maturity far beyond her years. She has carried the burden of housekeeping for her father for a long time. She is a young woman. Charlotte is a child."

"She was sixteen all the same," replied the colonel. "These chits of girls in this colony are women with women's notions about men in their heads before they have shed their short dresses. No! She must go to school and at once! She is mad about that boy!"

"But, my dear," interjected his wife, "the boy——"

"Oh, the boy is good enough," burst forth the colonel. "I am not saying a word against the boy, though he requires some taming, but he is not good enough for my girl."

"I quite agree," said his wife, "but surely we are not seriously discussing the question of a possible alliance between these two children."

"Well, not exactly," replied the colonel, somewhat dashed by the mild astonishment and more by the quiet humor which appeared upon his wife's face. "But, at any rate, they must not be allowed

to run together. That boy will be back here to-morrow. He will have Black Hawk with him. I feel he will make his point. He will become a hero in that silly child's eyes. Can't you send her away some place for to-day?"

"Send her away?"

"I mean, get her out of the house!" cried the colonel impatiently. "Send her off to Burch's for a week. Let her have a week's outing—she is always keen for it."

"Of course, my dear," said his wife, "we can send her for a visit to Mrs. Burch. Mrs. Burch is always glad to have her."

"I'll take her there myself to-morrow. I have a message for the miller, anyway," said the colonel.

"Oh! there is no need of your going. We shall send Edward," replied his wife. "There are a number of things that I want done to-morrow which I should like you to attend to. I think it would be just as well to send Edward along to the Burches'." Mrs. Brookes was a wise woman. She was not quite certain as to the effect of an hour's conference between Charlotte and her father in his present state of mind.

Colonel Brookes had been one of Carleton's officers in the Revolutionary War. Upon the conclusion of the war, disgusted with English social and political life and lured by the generous land grants offered to army officers by Colonel John Graves Simcoe, the newly appointed Governor of Upper Canada, Colonel Brookes, with a very considerable fortune realized from the sale of his estates and other securities, sailed for the New World.

His thousand-acre land grant selected from the more fertile section of the Niagara district, together with lands purchased from impecunious settlers eager to be relieved of their holdings, made him one of the largest property owners in the Niagara district, soon to be one of its most distinguished citizens.

He threw himself with enthusiasm into the life and work of the colony. He became a patron of agriculture, of horticulture, and of stock breeding, and identified himself with every movement that made for the improvement of life in the colony.

He was invited to stand for election to the House of Assembly as a supporter of the Government party, with whose political opinions and principles he was naturally in sympathy. A very

slight acquaintance with the inner workings of both political parties in the new country was sufficient, however, to reveal the existence in embryo of the same tendency to intrigue and corrupt practice which had disgusted him with political life in the home land. The colonel would have none of it. Indeed, the political leaders of both parties soon became aware that the colonel was deficient in some of the qualities which would make his support of any real value. As Mr. Swayzie, a member of the House of Assembly, and a devoted adherent of the Government party had put it to a group of his neighbors assembled on an occasion in the village blacksmith shop, "The colonel is a fine gentleman and a good citizen. He's got lots of horse sense in a business deal, but he don't seem to have no head for politics. He don't know how to give and take."

"Ay, and that is the truth you are saying, Mr. Swayzie," Sergeant Major Ross had replied. "He does not know how to give what is not his to give nor how to take what no honest man would take," to which Mr. Swayzie's usually ready tongue could find no reply.

But while the colonel declined to accept office in the government he remained none the less one of its most vigorous supporters. Not so much because of his respect for or admiration of the government, but largely because of his suspicions of the loyalty of the "Jacobins." This group of politicians formed the active nucleus of the Opposition party in colonial politics. They were composed of disgruntled and unsuccessful colonists and recent American settlers "from across the river" who had flocked to Upper Canada in large numbers attracted by the free government lands, the low taxes, and the rich opportunities in trade which the colony afforded. These American settlers, by reason of their experience in pioneer life, their shrewd business ability, and their indomitable industry, soon achieved a place of importance in the colony, and by reason of their devotion to democratic ideals became an influential element in the party of the Opposition, to which the colonel applied the same indiscriminating denomination of "Jacobins." His suspicion, hatred, and dread of these same "Jacobins" was the dominating factor in the colonel's political opinion and the main article in his political creed.

The leader in the House of the party of the Opposition was Mr. William Weekes, the recently elected member for the constituencies of Durham, Simcoe, and East York, but the leader of the party in the country was no less a person than His Honor Judge Thorpe, newly arrived from Prince Edward Island, whose liberal opinions and independent type of mind naturally affiliated him with the party opposed to a government which had frequently announced itself as determined to eradicate from the colony all democratic tendencies as being revolutionary and dangerous. While it was Mr. Weekes who in the House fired the shots, it was Judge Thorpe who prepared the bullets. Indeed, the judge was frequently to be seen within the precincts of the House itself, where he would be openly consulted by the members of the Opposition seeking advice upon points of law or procedure. On an occasion, indeed, he had been known during a heated discussion to rise and offer opinion upon the point at issue.

The colonel had spent a heated hour in Hinds's Hotel contending with "Jacobins" against the attitude and practice of Judge Thorpe, who, ignoring the high traditions of the bench, had descended to wage unworthy war in the arena of partisan politics. It was inevitable therefore that to Colonel Brookes the name of Judge Thorpe was anathema, and became to him as the proverbial red rag to a bull.

That his son Hubert appeared to be well disposed to these "Jacobins" awakened a certain anxiety in his mind. He was inordinately proud of his brilliant son. High spirited, quick tempered, independent in his thinking, he was just the kind of youth to be led astray. He must watch him carefully. The boy was quite right to be indignant at the injustice in the administration of the affairs of the country, but it was folly to burn down the house in order to destroy the vermin that infested it.

The colonel remembered the approaching interview with Black Hawk. He was glad that Sergeant Ross was to be present. The sergeant understood the boy and would exert a moderating influence upon him. It pleased him also to think that Charlotte was safely out of the way, although he had smiled this morning at his fears in regard to his little daughter. He could safely trust

her to her mother, in whose calm serenity of judgment twenty years of life with her had wrought an assured confidence.

An hour before the time set Black Hawk walked into the colonel's kitchen after the very casual and independent manner of the Indian, with the salutation to the maid:

"How!"

"What do you want?" said the maid, flustered by the unexpected appearance of the Indian at her kitchen door.

"Say colonel chief, big boss, Black Hawk come here."

"What did you say?"

"Say colonel chief, Big Boss, Black Hawk, me," tapping his chest, "come here."

The deep tones of the Indian rolling out from the back of his throat struck terror into the heart of the maid.

"I don't know what you are saying." Her voice, rising shrilly, brought her mistress upon the scene.

"What is it, Harriet?" asked Mrs. Brookes. "Oh, good-morning," she continued as she observed the Indian at the door. "Will you not come in and sit down?"

With Mrs. Brookes there was never any failure in that courtesy which marks the true gentlewoman in her dealings with those who might be considered her inferiors in social status.

The Indian remained standing.

"What can I do for you?" continued Mrs. Brookes, approaching him.

"Me want speak big colonel chief. Me Black Hawk," said the Indian, tapping his breast. "Me come see big chief."

"Oh! You wish to see the colonel," said Mrs. Brookes kindly. "You are Black Hawk, is that it? Sit down here. Won't you have a cup of tea?"

The Indian remained standing proudly erect, indifferent to her offer of hospitality. He had business to do with the Big Chief, and nothing must be allowed to interfere with that.

"Very well, I will get him," said Mrs. Brookes. She hurried away to the office, where the colonel was entertaining Sergeant Ross.

"Well, your chief is here," she announced. "I knew he would come."

"My chief! The deuce you say! You mean Black Hawk and the boy?"

"No sign of the boy," said his wife, "but the chief insists on seeing you at once." Mrs. Brookes smiled as she thought of the haughty Indian standing proudly at the door and rejecting her offers of hospitality. "He will not even eat till he has transacted his business with you."

"Oh, he won't, eh? He's the first Indian I have seen then who declines to eat. I shall come with you at once."

The colonel found the young chief standing at the door, erect, stern, proudly indifferent to his environment, which must have excited his lively interest and curiosity.

"Hello. How are you?" said the colonel cordially, offering the Indian his hand.

The Indian ignored the hand. "Me Black Hawk," he said. Then, pointing to the sun, he continued, "See! He sleep, one, two hour," holding up two fingers. "Me, Black Hawk, here two hour." Again he pointed to the sun. "Running Boy, he say, Black Hawk be here two hour," again pointing to the sun.

The colonel was not unfamiliar with Indian speech and manners. He felt in this Indian an attitude of challenging hostility, and he knew well the futility of offering hospitality until he had established relations of equality and friendship.

"You mean René the boy said you were to be here two hours before sundown," said the colonel, assuming an air of dignity equaling that of the Indian himself.

"Huh!" ejaculated the Indian.

"Where is the boy?" said the colonel.

"Running Boy, he come one hour, two mebbe. He go on store."

"Ah! The boy has gone to the store in the village. He will be here in an hour or so?" asked the colonel.

"Huh!" said the Indian.

"Come this way," said the colonel, leading the Indian to his office, where the sergeant was already sitting.

The Indian greeted the sergeant, who was an old friend, with grave courtesy, but remained standing until the colonel had taken a seat, when he took the chair offered him near the door.

"You come a long way to-day, Black Hawk?" inquired the colonel.

"Big Fork, sun up two hour," replied the Indian, holding up two fingers. "Running Boy, he come Indian wigwam. Say, me come here. Black Hawk come."

"Big Fork!" exclaimed the colonel. "Thirty miles from here if it is a mile. Quite a jaunt. Quite a forced march, eh, Sergeant?"

"A good day's march over these trails," replied the sergeant.

"Where did you have dinner, Black Hawk?" asked the colonel.

The Indian shook his head. "Black Hawk eat—run! run—eat!"

"By Jove!" said the colonel. "You must be faint with hunger!"

He pulled the bell for the maid and gave orders for refreshments. In a few moments she appeared with cake and a decanter of whisky which she set on the table.

The colonel poured out three glasses. "Have a little refreshment, Sergeant, before dinner," he said.

"Thank you, sir," replied the sergeant, taking the glass in his hand and standing at attention.

"Black Hawk, have something," said the colonel.

The Indian rose to his feet and stood rigid, with nostrils quivering. He took the glass, bowed toward the colonel, turned to the door, and emptied the glass upon the grass. "No drink. Running Boy, he say no drink," said Black Hawk. "He come one hour."

The colonel put down his glass untasted. The sergeant did likewise. They were both too truly gentlemen to embarrass their guest.

"Sit down, Black Hawk," said the colonel kindly. "Sit down, Sergeant. We must wait the arrival of the boy, apparently."

"Black Hawk has given his word, Colonel, and it must be a sore trial to him this minute."

"Let us hope that the trial will not be too greatly prolonged," answered the colonel dryly.

Before the hour set René appeared with a large sack on his shoulders, a gun in his hand, and a tomahawk and a hatchet at his belt. He came to the front door and was shown at once to the office, where he was welcomed heartily by the colonel. He went to Black Hawk, said a few words to him in the Indian tongue, to which the chief made eager reply.

"Black Hawk must get back to his camp to-night," said the boy. "I promised that he should. We would like to show you something now if you will let us," he said to the colonel.

"What about dinner first?"

The boy hesitated an instant, then said courteously, "We will eat on our way back."

"Suit yourself," said the colonel.

"René, you will be minding your manners," said the sergeant severely.

"Did I say anything wrong?" he inquired of the colonel. "I didn't mean to, but we have a lot to show you."

"Go on," said the colonel.

René took the sack that he had brought with him and emptied its contents upon the floor. At this juncture the colonel's son entered the office.

"Halloo, René," cried Edward. "What's all this stuff? Indian trade?"

The boy made no answer but turned to the colonel and said, "Your son knows the Indian language."

"Not very much," said Edward.

"Your son knows the Indian language enough to correct any mistakes that might be made."

"Listen to me, my boy," said the colonel sharply, "I am prepared to accept your word in this matter. I have never doubted your word. Go on, sir."

"René, you will not be insulting to the colonel," said the sergeant sternly.

"Insulting? How? I would not think of insulting you," said René, turning to the colonel.

"No! No!" replied the colonel. "There is no question of insult. Go on."

René proceeded to arrange in order the curious medley of articles which he had dumped from his sack.

"All this, sir, I have got from Black Hawk's people. He will tell you the prices they paid. And here is a list of prices I got today from Mr. Hamilton's store."

"Take this, Edward," said the colonel, handing his son the price list.

Rapidly René went over the articles spread out on the floor, touching each and asking the price from the chief, while Edward checked off the prices from the list in his hand.

A weird assortment the articles formed. Brass spangles, beads and ribbons of varied color, tawdry bracelets and earrings, gewgaws and trinkets for personal adornment, pot-metal knives, hatchets, flints and steels that would not spark, mirrors.

The colonel's indignation grew with the recital. "Scandalous! Abominable! Outrageous!" he exclaimed from time to time.

When the list was exhausted, René turned to the chief and spoke a few words. Black Hawk went out of the room and in a few moments returned, bringing with him the shattered fragments of a musket. This he handed to the boy.

"This is the gun that did for Black Hawk," he said.

The colonel took the broken fragments in his hand. The musket was obviously of the very cheapest make and poorest material.

"Where did this thing come from?" he asked.

"Albany, sir," said René. "A good lot of these things come from the other side of the line."

"Ah! The less of this kind of thing we have the better for this country," replied the colonel.

"Here is a new musket, sir, bought last year," said René. He took the gun, put his knees against the barrel, and bent it almost double.

"Do you mean to tell me," exclaimed the colonel, "that the sixty thousand pounds annually allotted to the Indian tribes is spent on this trash?"

"Oh, no sir!" exclaimed Edward. "The expenses of distribution are very heavy. I have known a man to get five pounds a day for the use of a horse. I remember another received fifteen pounds for a team and wagon for a single day."

"Outrageous!" ejaculated the colonel.

"That it is, sir," said the sergeant.

"Rather difficult to be loyal to such a government, sir," said Hubert.

The colonel checked himself abruptly. "Ah, well, Sergeant," he said, "we must not blame the government entirely for this

rascality. There are thieves and robbers in every business and in all governments."

"That is so, sir," answered the sergeant. "But I will be remembering that in the army, sir, the officer commanding was always held responsible for the misdeeds of his adjutant."

"Quite true. You have me there, Sergeant. And yet—and yet, what can we do? Can we trust the government of our country to these Jacobins? Can we hand our province over to these Irish rebels and Yankees?"

"Never!" said René. "They aren't fit for government."

The colonel turned sharply upon him. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean, sir, they messed up things in France. And now, when Napoleon is trying to get England by the throat, this is no time to make trouble for Britain in this country."

"My man," said the colonel warmly, "you have the word! The very word! The word that ought to be spoken all over this country, eh, Sergeant? This is no time for men loyal to the Empire to be doing anything that will embarrass the home government or our government here, or give aid and comfort to our foes. God knows we have enough of them on both sides of the water."

"You are right, sir," replied the sergeant earnestly. "But it is very hard to keep silent in the face of such things as these. I am not speaking of my own grievances just now. I am no rebel, Colonel, but this kind of thing makes rebels out of loyal men."

"No, sir, no personal wrong can make a rebel out of a loyal man," replied the colonel.

René nodded his head.

"What say you, young man?" said the colonel, noting the boy's approval.

"A man has got to be loyal, I guess, no matter what happens to him," said the boy simply.

"Right again!" cried the colonel in astonished approval. "Sergeant, we must send this young man to Parliament some day."

"Who knows?" said the sergeant. "Meantime he must stick to his books."

A flush came to René's cheek.

"Surely! Surely!" replied the colonel. "But boys will be boys, you know. You cannot put old heads on young shoulders."

"Boys should be preparing to be men, sir," said the sergeant.

"What does Black Hawk want for all these—these—this trash?" asked the colonel, sweeping his hand contemptuously over the articles strewn upon the floor.

René spoke to the chief, who replied briefly, waving his hand in a lordly way.

"You may have them, Colonel," he says. "They are of no value to him. He says only squaws and squaw men buy them."

But the colonel would not have it so. He would take them at the prices paid to the traders.

Again René consulted the chief, who promptly repudiated the suggestion.

"The chief says," interpreted René, "that the traders robbed his people. He would not rob the Colonel Chief."

"Gad! he's a gentleman," exclaimed the colonel. "I shall take them at the store prices then."

To this the chief finally agreed.

"Now you will stay to dinner with us, my boy," said the colonel.

René glanced at the chief.

"And Black Hawk too, of course," continued the colonel.

Again René consulted the Indian, who in a few words made reply, grinning most cheerfully the while.

"The chief says that the white man has so many dishes that he would not have time to eat," interpreted René.

"Ah!" said the colonel. "Well, you, René, you can stay to dinner? You didn't finish your dinner last night, you know." The colonel's smile was most cordial.

He pulled the bell as he spoke. "Call Mrs. Brookes," he said to the maid.

"I was rude last night," said René in a low voice. "I was very rude, sir, I am afraid. I was too mad to act right. I am sorry. I would like to apologize to Mrs. Brookes," turning to the lady who had just entered.

"Tut! tut!" replied the colonel. "I must confess I lost my

temper too, but now you will stay with us. Mrs. Brookes will be glad to have you."

"Yes, surely, René. We will be delighted to have you," said the lady.

The boy hesitated. He was keen to remain. "Thank you," he said, bowing to Mrs. Brookes. "I must go with the chief. It is better that I go with the chief."

"Black Hawk will accept a present now, I think, Father," suggested Edward.

René consulted with the chief. The proper relations being established, the chief signified his gracious acceptance of the suggestion.

"You must come again, René," said the colonel cordially. "We shall always be delighted to see you. I remember your kindness to my little daughter and her friend last year. We were most grateful to you for your protection. My little girl was loud in her praises. She is away from home to-day, I am sorry to say."

The colonel turned toward the sergeant as René and his friend disappeared down the lane toward the back trail, which would take them to the Big Forks, thirty miles away. "We must keep our eyes on your young man, Sergeant. He must get his opportunity. He is one of our coming men in this colony, unless I am greatly mistaken."

"Och! He is a good enough lad, but he is very queer. He takes his own gait," replied the sergeant, shaking his head doubtfully.

"Never you mind, Sergeant. Mark my words, there goes one of our coming men in this country. What say you, my dear?" he continued, turning to his wife.

"He seems a very nice boy indeed," she replied. "I am sure he will be a credit to us all." She turned away from her husband, a discreet but enigmatical smile playing around her lips. The colonel was really a singular man. This morning he had hustled his daughter away from home to escape possible contact with this boy. This evening he was expressing his regret to the boy for her absence. Men were really very difficult to understand and to manage.

CHAPTER VI

THE HONORABLE EUSTACE

EARLY next morning the colonel was astir and afoot. With him action followed hard upon the heels of intention. As far as in him lay matters in the Indian Department and in the Land Department were to be set right at once. His sense of justice had been outraged by the tale of the wrongs of the Indians and even more deeply by the sufferings of the soldiers as illustrated in the case of his friend Sergeant Major Ross. He was determined to interview Colonel Claus, the head of the Indian Department, without loss of time.

The offices of the departments of Public Lands and Indian Affairs for the Niagara district were in the same building. The main business in connection with these departments of government was transacted, of course, at the capital. Hence, for the sake of economy and because the business transacted in the village of Niagara was of minor importance in these departments, the clerks were supposed to be able to transact the business necessary in both departments alike.

The office of Indian Affairs happened to be in charge of a young gentleman recently arrived in the colony, a friend and protégé of the newly appointed Lieutenant-Governor, Francis Gore. He was a young man of good English family, the Honorable Eustace Burton, second son of Lord Burton of the Burtons of Somerset.

In regard to the business of the office, he labored under the disadvantage of complete ignorance of the affairs of his department. This young gentleman the colonel found lolling in a comfortable chair and smoking an enormous pipe. His dress, his monocle, his superior manner, his drawling accent abundantly testified to his antecedents.

"Good-morning," said the colonel pleasantly. "I should like to see Mr. Claus."

"He is not in at present," replied the Honorable Eustace with large indifference, screwing his monocle firmly into his right eye.

"Ah! When will he be in the office?" inquired the colonel.

"Cawn't say in the least." The accent and drawl of the Honorable Eustace must be imagined. They do not lend themselves to reproduction in type.

"Where is he?" asked the colonel.

"At present cawn't say in the least."

"Do you know when he will be in the office?"

"Cawn't say in the very least."

The ignorance of the Honorable Eustace regarding the location of his chief and the hours governing his activities was equaled only by the supercilious indifference toward all things and persons colonial.

The colonel eyed him steadily for a moment, the Honorable Eustace returning his gaze with an air of mild indifference.

"I wish to make some inquiries in this office concerning matters relative to trading with the Indians and——"

The indifference of the Honorable Eustace vanished. He sprang to his feet and approached the counter.

"Trading with the Indians!" he exclaimed. "Blowed if a soldier chap hasn't just been in here asking about Indians and lands, although this is no Land Office. Most obnoxious fellow! Positively rude to me! Insulting, in fact! Made most extraordinary demands. Ross was the johnnie's name! Sergeant Ross, he said."

"Sergeant Ross!" exclaimed the colonel. "Insulting? I decline to accept that statement, sir."

"But I most positively assure you, sir, that he was distinctly rude to me." The Honorable Eustace was obviously excited. His monocle dropped from his face. "He demanded facts about his lands. Wanted to see papers, returns, and that sort of thing. I know nothing whatever about his lands or his bally papers."

The colonel took out his card case, selected a card, and handed it to the excited youth, who, screwing his monocle into his face, took the card and glanced at it. "Aw! Colonel Brookes!" he said

with sudden interest. "Delighted, I'm shuah. Burton is my name. Burtons of Somerset, y' know."

"No, I don't know," said the colonel, with rising wrath. "And to tell the truth, I don't much care to know. I am here to get some information in regard to the Indians. Do you or do you not know anything about these matters?"

"Aw! Awfully sorry, Colonel. The fact is that I have just arrived in this beastly colony and know absolutely nothing about the bally business."

"Then what are you here for?" thundered the colonel, completely losing himself.

"Bay Jove, Colonel! This is the very question I'm asking myself, don't y' know."

"Is there anyone in this office who knows something about the business?"

"Aw! awfully sorry, Colonel. The johnnie who does this thing is out for an hour or so."

"Where *is* Claus?" said the colonel, rapping the counter sharply with his knuckles.

"As a matter of fact, Colonel, I believe he has gone up to the capital. York, I believe, is the name of the bally place."

"Will he be back to-day?"

"Good Lord, no! As a matter of fact," and here the Honorable Eustace became quite confidential, "there has been a jolly old row on up there, and I presume——"

"Excuse me your presumptions, they are of no interest to me. When Mr. Claus returns would you kindly say for me that he would serve the interests of the government better if when he is absent he would close up his office rather than leave it in the hands of a numbskull whose ignorance of his duties is only excelled by his insolence to the public?"

The Honorable Eustace stiffened slowly his elegant and languid form. "Bay Jove! Colonel, sir, you go too far."

"Not so far as I should like to go," replied the colonel, his rage quite overcoming his self-control; "and, if you give me any more of your insolence, not so far as I shall go."

"Sir! Only your age——" began the Honorable Eustace.

"My age!" sputtered the colonel. "My age, sir! Confound your impudence! Say another word and I'll——" The colonel's hand was on the counter.

The door opened at his back.

"Hello, Father. What's all the row about? Anything I can do?" It was his son Hubert who stepped in and stood quietly surveying the Honorable Eustace with none too friendly a gaze.

"This—this young——" began the colonel.

"Pa-a-w-don me!" said the Honorable Eustace, in a voice whose cool, level tone at once commanded attention.

Hubert knew his father. "Wait a moment, Father," he said, his hand upon his father's arm. "This gentleman has something to say."

"If you will allow me a moment, gentlemen," said the Honorable Eustace, "I should like to say that nothing was further from my mind than to insult any man, least of all Colonel Brookes, to whom, by the way, I bear a letter from his friend, Colonel Frederick Stonecrop."

"Stonecrop!" cried the colonel. "Why! Bless my soul! Fred Stonecrop! Tut! tut! Please forgive my haste, sir. Glad to see you, sir. Glad to see you indeed! And glad to bid you welcome to our country. Tut! tut! Not a word! Not a word! Beastly office! Disgraceful to put a stranger in such a position! I shall certainly speak to Claus about it. This is my son Hubert, Mr.——"

"Burton is my name," said the Honorable Eustace, allowing a friendly smile to overspread his countenance. "Somerset Burtons, y'know."

"Ah! Somerset Burtons. Certainly! Certainly! Fine old family. You will do me the honor of dining with us."

"Charmed indeed!" drawled the Honorable Eustace. "Awfully sorry this sort of thing occurred. But this beastly office has to be open, and the young johnnie who really looks after the papers, don't y'know, has disappeared, absolutely vanished. Deuced embarrassing."

"Never mind, sir! Never mind! I shall call for you at five o'clock this evening. You will dine with us and stay the night."

"So sorry, Colonel. The young fellah has another engagement this evening at five o'clock. Some other night, perhaps."

"Not at all. We shall make it six o'clock," said the colonel heartily. "Quite all right."

"Aw! Delighted, I'm sure," murmured the Honorable Eustace, shaking hands with the colonel and his son, who took their departure.

CHAPTER VII

POLITICAL PURITY

Late in the afternoon the colonel strode into the barroom of Hinds's Hotel, where had convened a very considerable company of village folks and of farmers from the surrounding district in a state of high excitement.

Some two weeks previously an ex-soldier had been arrested for violent assault upon an official connected with the Land Department of the government. The circumstances surrounding the incident were by no means unusual in the colony. The soldier's land was completely shut off from the settlement and all its privileges by a government grant to a member of the Executive Council of land containing five thousand acres for himself and twelve hundred for each of his four children, one an infant of three days—some ten thousand acres, or fifteen square miles, in all.

Thus isolated from civilization, without roads, bridges, school, market, or church, the soldier lost heart and determined to sell out. Making inquiry as to title, he was astonished to learn that, owing to his failure to meet his taxes—the members of the Executive Council paid no taxes—his title was clouded, making the sale impossible.

Maddened by this discovery, with starvation for himself and his family staring him in the face, and flung into a paroxysm of frenzied rage by the supercilious insolence of an under clerk, the soldier had suddenly fallen upon the official, and but for the interference of other clerks would have done him bodily harm. He was promptly arrested and lodged in jail.

It was rumored that the government was determined to make an example of him, by exacting the full penalty of his crime, and thus put down once and for all the lawlessness that was rapidly growing throughout the country.

Immediately the whole settlement was in a flame. Ex-soldiers

everywhere made common cause with the offender. The Opposition in the House and in the country championed the prisoner. A fund was raised for his defense. Mr. Weekes, the leader of the Opposition, offered his services as counsel free of charge. Indignation meetings were held in every village and at every church door. In homes and hamlets the case was discussed with fiery indignation.

Partisan fury raged at its height when it was announced that the trial judge for the case in all likelihood would be His Honor Judge Thorpe. Judge Thorpe! The radical judge! The most able, the most brilliant, and the best hated opponent of the government. Judge Thorpe was the rallying center of all the radical and revolutionary elements in the colony. He was the leader who furnished the brains for the Opposition in the House. He it was that only a few weeks ago, receiving from the Grand Jury of the London District a formal document setting forth in detail the wrongs which His Majesty's loyal subjects were suffering at the hands of a notoriously unscrupulous and corrupt government, had dared to present the same to His Excellency, Lieutenant-Governor Francis Gore. The news that Judge Thorpe was to try the case awakened on one side triumphant jubilation, on the other furious rage not unmixed with grave concern and anxiety.

As the colonel entered the barroom of Hinds's Hotel he was immediately surrounded by a company of his friends, who began to discuss the situation with him.

"What do you think of it, Colonel?" a friend inquired.

"Think of what?"

"Weekes taking the defense and Thorpe on the bench?"

With a mighty effort the colonel controlled his indignation and maintained an air of judicial calm.

"My opinion is, sir, that there is a deliberate effort being made to thwart the course of justice. We are in the hands of a dangerous element which it behooves all loyal and honest citizens to oppose with all their might."

"What do you mean exactly, Colonel?" inquired another voice.

"Surely, sir," answered the colonel, still preserving his judicial tone, "that question is unnecessary. I mean the whole brood of these revolutionaries! These Irish rebels! Yankee republicans!

In short, I name them 'Jacobins,' for they are the product of the same spirit of jealous envy and hatred that produced those bloodthirsty regicides of Paris. Too many of these traitors among us." The colonel was fast losing control of himself.

"Hold your horses a spell, Colonel. Ain't you a bit too sweeping in them remarks of yours?"

The colonel turned toward the speaker. "Well, Mr. Hanks, I may have erred in my last statement," he said, bowing courteously to the speaker. I am willing to acknowledge that among our American fellow citizens there are many excellent and loyal people, and among them none more so than my friend Mr. Hiram Hanks." Here the colonel swept Mr. Hanks a bow that might have done homage to a king. "But, sir, you will acknowledge that there are among us those who come from our neighboring republic, who are at once a menace to this country in which they are making their home and their living and a discredit to that country from which they have come."

"W-e-l-l, Colonel, I want to say there's mebbe a skunk or two in every cornfield, but all the same there's a lot of good Yanks who are good Canadians, and a lot of other good Canadians too who don't jest jump with them gentry up to muddy York, and I'm one of them."

"And here's another, Mr. Hanks," cried a voice, "and there are a lot of us who hope to show these upstart aristocrats that freeborn men will not long tolerate tyranny in government."

"And there are many, Mr. Willcocks, too ignorant to form opinions of their own who take them ready made from better educated but under-principled demagogues, who might have been expected to use what powers they have in promoting goodwill among the citizens of this colony and respect for law and good government."

"Good government!" shouted Mr. Willcocks. "Good government! Of what government are you speaking, sir? A government that prostitutes its powers, both personal and official, to corrupt, intimidate, cajole the electorate, as in the recent election, in order to deprive the citizens of this country of anything that might be called representative government."

"Here! Here! That's the talk! We'll show 'em."

The quick response from all quarters in the crowd roused the colonel to fury. Swiftly he turned upon Mr. Willcocks and those behind him, his face white and his voice like cold steel. "Gentlemen," he said, "that there have been irregularities in the last election I am not in a position to deny."

"You're right, you are not!" sneered Mr. Willcocks.

With one swift stride the old colonel stood face to face with the speaker.

"Do you mean, Mr. Willcocks," he said in quiet, level tones, "to suggest that in any degree or in any form I have been guilty of any irregularity or corrupt practice in this election? Speak, sir."

The man thus challenged fell back a pace from the colonel's cold fury.

"I made no reference to you personally, Colonel Brookes. But your friends are not free from practices the most corrupt and contemptible that ever disgraced an election in this country."

"My friends! Name one," said the colonel, his voice dropping a tone but losing nothing of its cutting edge.

"Yes, your friends, plenty of them, and there's one not far from you this minute."

The colonel wheeled about. "Point him out, Mr. Willcocks," he said.

"Right at your back there!" said Mr. Willcocks, throwing all reserve to the winds.

The colonel swung on his heel, saw a squat, swart, heavily bearded man with keen face and a piercing eye. "Mr. Swayzie!" ejaculated the colonel, somewhat abashed.

"Ask him, for instance," said Willcocks, "how Ned Bickle voted and why?"

The man shrank back for an instant, then, with an expression of injury and surprise, exclaimed, "What, me? What do you mean?"

"Yes, you, Mr. Swayzie. You know right well what I mean. How did Ned Bickle vote and why?"

"Ned Bickle?" replied Mr. Swayzie in a puzzled voice. "What do I know of Mr. Bickle's voting? By the way, I think I saw Mr. Bickle present a moment ago. Let him speak for himself."

"Yes, there's Ned! Come on, Ned, speak up."

Many voices urged Ned Bickle forward, all friendly and encouraging. Sorely against his inclination, Ned Bickle came to the front.

"Ned, you tell this company——" began Mr. Willcocks.

But Mr. Swayzie took hold with a firm hand. "Excuse me, Mr. Willcocks. You have made a grave charge against my character. I'm a-going to see that charge through to the last dollar of my money, you bet your life on that."

In some subtle way there seemed to exude from the little man a sense of suppressed deadly force.

"Now, Ned, you have heard what Mr. Willcocks has jest said. You voted against Weekes in the last election. I happened to be there when you voted. This—this—Mr. Willcocks here"—the quiet contempt in his tone was not without effect upon that gentleman and upon the whole company—"would like Colonel Brookes and the rest of the gentlemen present to believe that in some way I influenced your vote. In fact, he as much as says that I forced you to vote against Mr. Weekes. I'm not saying that, you understand, Ned, but this man—" here he pointed a grimy, stubby but very unwavering and rigid finger at Mr. Willcocks—"this man," he repeated, "would like to make these people believe that you and I, Ned, have been guilty of something corrupt in connection with your voting."

"Here! You leave him alone, Swayzie," shouted Mr. Willcocks. "Let me ask him just one question."

"Excuse me, Mr. Willcocks," said Mr. Swayzie firmly. "You had your chance. You made your charge. Or did you? Did you charge me with a corrupt act in connection with Mr. Bickle's voting?"

"I said——" Mr. Willcocks began.

"Did you or did you not?" The little man appeared to swell to quite important dimensions. His rigid finger at the end of an outstretched arm was like a sword point at Mr. Willcocks's throat.

"What I said——" replied Mr. Willcocks, but, like a bulldog on his grip, Mr. Swayzie would not let him go on.

"Did you make such a charge?"

Here the colonel interposed. "You certainly made the charge, Mr. Willcocks. Why not acknowledge it? Do you wish to retract? You must answer 'yes' or 'no.'"

"If you will just allow me to explain," persisted Mr. Willcocks.

"Explain! Explain! One single word would be all the explanation that gentleman asks. The word is 'yes' or 'no,'" Mr. Swayzie said. "I give you one more chance to retract."

"Retract, you slimy snake! I'll see you in hell first," foamed Mr. Willcocks.

"Very well," said Mr. Swayzie. "Now, Ned."

"Gentlemen," cried Mr. Willcocks, "I claim the right of free speech. I wish to explain."

Again the colonel interposed. "Explain," he said. "Gentlemen, I appeal to you here. As this man was making certain charges against the government and its frauds of corrupt practice I inferred that he had reference to me personally. He has retracted that. He then definitely singled out Mr. Swayzie, known to you all as a former member of our House of Assembly. He definitely pointed out Mr. Swayzie as being guilty of corrupt action in connection with Mr. Bickle's vote."

"Let's hear what Ned has to say, Colonel," said Hiram Hanks. "He ought to know something about it."

"Just what I propose," said Mr. Swayzie. "Ned and I are both in this charge. He is the only man that can clear the thing up. I gave Mr. Willcocks a chance to take back what he said. He has not done it. Now he'll get his chance in another place. I say let's hear Mr. Bickle."

"Quite right! Come on, Ned! Speak up, Ned!"

"Yes, speak up, Ned," said Mr. Swayzie. "Mr. Willcocks charges me and charges you with corruption."

"Hold on there!" shouted Mr. Willcocks. "I didn't——"

"Oh, shut up!" cried a hostile voice. "Give Ned a chance."

"That is right!" continued Mr. Swayzie. "Let Mr. Bickle speak. I'll stand by what he says. Now then, Ned. Did I force you in any manner, shape, or form to vote against Mr. Weekes in

the last election, or did you vote like any free man of your own free will? Did you vote as I wanted you to, or as you wanted to yourself?"

"I did," said Mr. Bickle. A shout of mingled derision and delight went up from the crowd.

"Did what?" cried a number of voices.

"Just a moment, gentlemen," said Mr. Swayzie quietly. "Give Mr. Bickle a chance. Mr. Bickle is a free man, an intelligent man, and I believe an honest man. He knows his own mind." At this point Mr. Bickle, who had been obviously very uneasy, straightened up.

"He knows how he voted and why he voted as he did. Now I am asking you, Ned, can you tell us if you voted of your own free will for Weekes at the last election?"

"I certainly did," said Mr. Bickle with indignant emphasis. Another shout went up, this time from Mr. Swayzie's friends, a shout of triumph.

"Look here," cried Mr. Willcocks, pushing forward, "I'm not going to stand this!"

Swayzie waved him aside. "Did I in any way force you to vote as you did?"

"Why—eh—ah! Of course not." The initial hesitation in Mr. Bickle's answer caught the ear of the crowd.

"A-a-a-h!" Like a sigh the ejaculation swept the company.

"That is all, Mr. Willcocks," said Mr. Swayzie. "You will hear from me before long." A look of surprise, of admiration and delight could be seen on the faces of Mr. Swayzie's supporters. The ominous words carried a meaning which they had not in the least expected.

"Delighted, I am sure," cried Mr. Willcocks. "Any hour, place, or weapons."

"My lawyer will communicate with you," said Mr. Swayzie.

The look of surprise and admiration died out of the faces of his friends, who had expected quite another issue.

While Mr. Bickle was receiving the congratulations of his own and Mr. Swayzie's friends, with rather bad grace, it must be confessed, and was pushing his way through the crowding admirers to the door, Mr. Willcocks's voice again arrested him.

"Before you go, Mr. Bickle, do you mind telling this crowd whether Mr. Swayzie holds a mortgage on your farm?"

"Shame! Shame!" A chorus of indignation from all parties rose sharply.

"Don't answer him, Mr. Bickle," said the colonel, his voice vibrant with indignation. "This is beneath contempt."

But Swayzie came promptly forward. "I'll answer for him, though the matter is no one's business but Bickle's and mine. I do hold a mortgage on Bickle's farm, but perhaps Bickle will say whether he has ever been treated harshly in the matter of that mortgage."

"Never put the screws on anyone, eh?" said a voice from Mr. Willcocks's party. "Oh, no! Swayzie wouldn't."

"Come on, Ned. Tell us about it," cried a voice.

"Well," said Bickle, "I can answer that. The very last time he spoke about the mortgage he never said a thing about——" Mr. Bickle pulled himself up abruptly.

"Your memory is bad, Ned," laughed Willcocks. "Quite a long time ago, wasn't it?"

"Never was," said Mr. Bickle with indignation and great emphasis. "It was jest last fall. I remember well enough we was standin' by the post office, and he said, says he, 'That interest, Ned, I jest reckon that there ain't any hurry about it at all.'"

Mr. Swayzie beamed upon the company.

And again Mr. Bickle made toward the exit.

"Mr. Bickle, one moment please." A clear young voice arrested every ear. "Mr. Weekes used to be a friend of yours, was he not?"

Mr. Bickle peered through the crowd. "Yes, Mr. Hubert, he was."

"In fact, about a year ago now you were rather keen for him?"

A silence fell upon the company. The cool, clear, well-bred tones commanded their attention.

"Well, yes, I was. But a feller can change his mind, can't he?"

"Most certainly, Mr. Bickle. I changed my mind about the same time, I think. A few months ago I opposed Mr. Weekes, I don't mind telling you. Last fall I voted for him. Every man has a right to change his mind, and every honest and intelligent man

does change his mind if he has a good reason. You changed your mind last fall a few days before the election. It would be interesting to know why."

The colonel began to shuffle about angrily. He hesitated to check his son before this company. In fact, he was inordinately proud of the lad, but he was deeply surprised and grieved to have his son openly declare his allegiance to the party which in his mind represented all that was iniquitous in the province.

"Oh-ho!" ejaculated Mr. Swayzie scornfully. "We've got a young lawyer on the case!"

"No, Mr. Swayzie, not a lawyer yet," said Hubert courteously. "Some day, I hope. But, Mr. Swayzie, you force me to say that you have conducted this public inquiry in a manner that insults my intelligence and I believe the intelligence of this company——"

"Hear! Hear! Right you are, young feller! Go after him!"

"And which," continued Hubert quietly, "invites my protest. I should not have ventured to inquire as to Mr. Bickle's private affairs, but he has been good enough to take us into his confidence, and now perhaps as a matter of public interest he will tell us just why within a week or so of the election he changed his mind."

The colonel was shocked and grieved at the unexpected attack upon the government by his son. Yet he could not but admire the deadly precision of the attack and the cool courtesy with which it was delivered. In his indecision relief came to him from his son.

Once more the cool, clear voice pierced through the hubbub.

"We are waiting for Mr. Bickle's answer. Will Mr. Bickle explain to us how it comes that ten days before the election last year he hated the government and now he loves it."

"Not much I don't," shouted Mr. Bickle, the tides of emotion seething around him, carrying him quite out of his bearings. "A lot of robbers they are."

Shouts and laughter greeted this outburst. "Good boy, Ned!"

"Then you dislike Mr. Weekes, I take it?"

"No sich thing I don't," replied Mr. Bickle promptly. "Mr. Weekes never done nothing to me."

"Oh, you have nothing against Mr. Weekes?"

"No! Not a thing! Weekes is all right."

"But you didn't like his politics. For instance, his stand in the land question?"

"You bet I did. Weekes is all right on the land. Them blood suckers did me out of my back lot." There was no longer hesitation or indecision in Mr. Bickle's voice or manner. His face was red with rage, and he was ready to fight.

"What is all this foolery about, anyway?" burst forth Mr. Swayzie, pushing for the door. "I am done with it."

"This has gone far enough, Hubert," said the colonel sharply.

"All right, sir," said his son cheerfully. "If Swayzie is satisfied I am. I must confess that I have rather lost interest in the mystery connected with Mr. Bickle's vote. Mr. Bickle voted for the government which he hates and against Mr. Weekes whom he loves. He cannot explain why, but very evidently Mr. Bickle's voting has nothing whatever to do with the issues before the country."

Again shouts rocked the room. The last thing the colonel heard as he made his way toward the stable, eager to escape from the dilemma in which he was placed, was the vociferous cheering from the friends of Mr. Willcocks for young "Lawyer" Brookes.

As he turned from the door of the hotel he found Swayzie by his side. "I am truly sorry, sir," said that gentleman, "that a member of your family should be found associating himself with men like Willcocks and his gang."

"Mr. Swayzie," said the colonel, "allow me to say that I have not the slightest interest in your feelings, and as for the members of my family, I fancy you will agree with me that they are quite able to take care of themselves."

CHAPTER VIII

"LOVE'S MADNESS"

HUBERT, escaping from the throng of his admirers, mounted his horse and rode north. At first he rode fast, then, as he turned eastward, slowed his pace. He was still carrying the excitement of his bout with Mr. Swayzie. He still thrilled with the possible peril of his public declaration of political allegiance. For peril there was in it. He had challenged the opinion and sentiment of the vast majority of his friends and acquaintances. The issues were difficult to determine. His father would be enraged, his mother grieved, his brother would be against him. The whole coterie of government officials with a few notable exceptions, all the judges except Judge Thorpe, all the young aspirants for practice or honors in the legal profession, the church dignitaries from Bishop Strachan down, except perhaps Addison, the well-loved rector of St. Mark's, would look askance at him. But he would win friends. Many of the business men, merchants and traders, most of the farmers too—Radcliffe, for instance—would be with him. The broken ex-soldiers and half-pay officers, who had given up their land in disgust and despair, would back him. Little help, however, would come from them. Some of his new friends he thought of with a shudder. Weekes was right enough. So was Judge Thorpe, though at times hot-headed and not always judicious. Willcocks he shrank from, and from all the crew of Yankee agitators, though among the settlers from across the river there were those he would be proud to call friends.

However, he was in for it. He had spoken the deepest convictions of his soul. At all costs he would stick. He wondered how Hope would take it.

His road, which led toward the lake shore, ran between farms, most of them small, enclosed with snake fences clumsily picturesque and fences constructed of stump roots, which presented

a weird and fantastic appearance, like huge octopi whose waving tentacles had become suddenly rigid. Each farm had its dwelling, either the first cabin of the settlers or the neatly built and comfortable log house with the primary dwelling used now as shed or stable. Back of the farms was the dark line of the primeval forest, whose great pines with feathery crowns towered far above the hardwood, the deciduous trees—oak, elm, and maple—all the nut trees—beechnut, butternut, hickory, walnut—together, and the thick underbrush of hazel and alder, spruce, balsam, larch, and hemlock. That forest in its gloomy depths still sheltered wild animals, deer, bear, wolf, and the smaller and more timid things that furnished the settlers with much of their warm winter clothing. Close to the forest line were the pasture fields still with their stumps and the *brûlés,* "burnt overs," the lands in the transition stage between forest and pasture.

Half an hour's ride brought Hubert to the Radcliffes' lane leading to the back pasture and the *brûlé* now framed in the golden glory of the autumn woods. Here he paused and eagerly scanned the fields lying between him and the forest; then, satisfied with what he had seen, he cantered up the lane till he came to a gateway closed by "bars," where he dismounted and waited in the shelter of a clump of spruces.

Far across the pasture a girl riding a pony could be seen slowly approaching, threading her way among the stumps and over the fallen timber, herding some cattle before her. Far as she was he could see the shining gold of her hair. He knew just how it fell from her forehead in a tangle of tiny curls and was gathered in a psyche knot low upon her neck. He knew just how through the tangle of curls the blue eyes, dark but with deep lights in them, were wont to look at him. Steady eyes they were, disconcertingly steady, cool, appraising eyes. So they looked at him last week as she stepped from the boat at the King's Wharf after two years' absence at school in Boston. Steady, cool, appraising, and yet with a lure, a confoundedly bewitching lure, in them. The memory of a glance he had caught, or thought he had caught, set his blood racing. But when she had greeted him the blue eyes that met his were so cool and steady that his eager, vociferous shout of welcome died ere it had passed his teeth, leaving him voiceless

and awkward as any clown. Her kindly greeting had chilled him to the heart with the perfection of its form. And yet there had been no coolness, anything but coolness. She was kindness itself. It was the kindliness of her manner that had sent him home sick at heart.

Among the spruce trees he sat motionless upon his horse, awaiting the approach of the girl and her herd, enraged to find that his heart had quickened its normal beat and that his hands were gripping his bridle reins with quite unnecessary tensity.

Leading the herd was a frisky heifer who, intent upon her own pranks, quite failed to note the horse and rider beyond the bars. The sudden jingle of the horse's bit as he tossed his head startled the heifer. With frantic leap, head and tail aloft, she dashed back upon the herd, hurling them into a wild panic which sent them careering through the *brûlé*. The horse, also startled at her frantic leap, responded with a side spring equally frantic, which unhorsed the young man and deposited him neatly in a sprawling heap upon the grass.

Controlling her pony, which had made a determined but ineffective effort to bolt after the cattle, the girl rode to the bars and sat looking down upon the young man, who had struggled to his feet, sputtering vain words of mingled rage and profanity.

"You are not hurt?" said the girl, smiling serenely upon him.

"Hurt? Dammit! Might have been killed by that confounded heifer of yours."

"She was terribly startled, poor thing."

"You're laughing!" he said wrathfully. "I might have been dragged——"

"I'm not laughing. I'm only——" Her control broke and her voice rang out in a peal of laughter. So enchanting a picture she made that the young man's wrath vanished, and after a brief struggle he joined in her laughter.

"All the same, Hope, I might have been killed."

Again her laugh chimed out, so like silver bells, he thought, that he longed chiefly to hear it again.

"Yes! Your crazy heifer!"

"And your silly horse!"—and again the silvery peal rang out. "By the way, where is he?"

"Oh, he's all right. He won't run far. There he is in the bush—I'll fetch him."

"And I'll get my cows."

It took but a few minutes for Hubert to secure and mount his horse, but it took quite half an hour of chasing for both riders, through the *brûlé* over fallen logs and among the stumps, to round up the cattle and herd them through the bars into the lane. This being achieved, Hubert found that his feeling of shyness had quite evaporated.

"I am awfully glad that I fell in with you this afternoon," he said as he rode side by side with the girl. "You are not so frightfully superior as you were last week."

"Superior?" Hope's level eyebrows went into an entrancing arch.

"Yes, superior. Last week I thought I had lost forever my little chum. Your second year of school completely changed you, Hope. When you went away to school you kissed me good-bye. When you came back last week you gave me your finger tips and a most polite bow. You were a most dreadfully grown-up young lady."

"But I am grown up. I am nineteen, you know." The faintest flush tinged her cheek, but her voice was cool and steady.

"Oh, pshaw! You know what I mean. You used—we used to go nutting together, riding, trapping ground hogs, fishing, everything together."

"Oh, I was a regular tomboy and a horrid little nuisance trotting around after you everywhere you went."

"Nuisance? Hope, you were adorable!" Hubert's voice was eager.

"You didn't expect me to trot round after you now?" Her serene smile disturbed him a bit.

"Certainly not. But all the same, Hope—— Oh, hang it! Can't we take things up where they were? I mean can't we be just the same good friends?"

"Good friends! Why of course we can, and we are. Oh, do look at that cloud! Isn't that just gorgeous? And the reflection on the lake. I do think it is splendid. It really is fine to be home

again and out like this instead of walking through a stuffy town on sidewalks."

Hubert glanced at the cloud.

"Didn't you like Boston? I thought——"

"Loved it! Oh, it is a dear old town. And there are lovely rides about. Oh, such lovely rides! So interesting! We rode a great deal."

"Who?" Hubert's voice was quite curt.

"Oh, a lot of us used to go long rides every Saturday—in fine weather, that is—when we weren't sailing or tramping."

"You had lots of friends, of course. You'll be quite a Yankee."

"Yes, many dear friends. They were so kind, so sweet to me." Her eyes grew reminiscent, resting on the far horizon where a golden cloud was mirrored in the placid waters of the lake.

Hubert's horse snorted and shied at a perfectly ordinary stump.

"Here! Hold up, you idiot!" He looked at his watch. "Hello! I'm going to be late for dinner. Well, you can handle your cows all right now?"

"Oh dear, yes! They never give me any trouble. Except——"

"Except when some blundering ass scares the daylights out of them."

"It really was your horse, you know, that scared them," smiled Hope. "You won't come in to dinner? You used to come, you know. Mother will be glad to have you."

"No, I must go. There's a new English chap coming home with Father to dinner—the Honorable Eustace Burton. The Burtons of Somerset, you know."

"Oh, that's just like him. How well you do it."

"You've met him?"

"Yes, I met him the other day. Colonel Claus drove him out. He seems a very nice young man."

"A bally English ass! Well, I must really go."

"Good-bye, Hubert. Thanks for your help with the cows. They *were* wild, weren't they?"

She gave him a firm, cool little hand at parting and a frank, kindly smile. "You will be over to see us soon, won't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Hubert in what he desperately hoped was a

calm voice. "Of course, I am awfully busy just now, you know."

"So I hear. Quite a rising lawyer, eh? Well, don't work too hard, you know." Again the silvery laugh rippled out between the warm red lips. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye. Hope—— Oh, darn it all! Good-bye." His horse swung round on its hind legs and was off at a gallop.

"Now what in the name of all the devils made you act like that? Infernal idiot that you are! You were going to be so calm and superior! Oh! ass! ass! ass! Confounded ass!" He pulled up his horse. He wanted to turn about for a farewell wave. That was their custom in the old days. He had always found Hope waiting to wave to him. But she would not be waiting for him this time. No, she was so cool, so sure of herself. Well, he would not turn. He would die first. She would not turn anyway. He would like to know, though, if she would turn. He was near the crossroads. If he did *not* turn he would be giving himself away. Why not turn just to show he didn't care a hoot anyway? In the old days he sometimes would omit the little ceremonial. Would forget it. And at the next meeting she would poutingly remind him of the neglect. Oh, what days they were! They would never come back. She was changed. Those Yankees had changed her. Some young Yankee swell with a lot of money. He was at the crossroads. He halted his horse and swung about.

There she was, waiting.

"Heavens above!" His heart choked him. He tried to yell as he moved his hand high over his head. His voice came in a croak. "Oh, thunder and blazes! What's wrong with me? Am I clean dotty?" He held his horse steady till the girl had waved again and had turned away.

"Jove! She is just the same!" His voice came husky. The blood was drumming in his ears. He had a mad desire to tear after her. His hands were taut upon the reins. His horse was pulling, poised for a gallop. In another instant he would be away.

"My God! What has come to me?" He came back to himself. His hands were trembling. He was breathing hard as from a race. He knew what had come to him. A devastating passion for that girl was sweeping his soul. He loved her. He wanted her. In every fiber of his being he wanted her. Life without her would be a

desolate and empty wilderness. Did she care? She had turned to wave a farewell. Would she have done that if she really cared? Did it not mean mere friendliness? As he rode along he reviewed the last hour spent with her. Her looks, her words, her tones. She was certainly changed. Once she had been glad to trot round after him. Only some two or three years ago he had lorded it over her. He recalled with a warm feeling at his heart that jolly brown-legged, brown-faced girl with the towsy golden hair, through which peered two big blue eyes. They were wonderful eyes. Even in those days he thought so. To-day they were ravishing, if they hadn't been quite so cool. At the end of his ride he decided that she didn't care for him. Some young Yankee with money—they all had money—had caught her. But he would not give her up. He could not. He would find some way to see her soon again. By the way, there was the Radcliffe raising bee next week. He would be there. So would everyone else, worse luck! But, at any rate, he would see her.

CHAPTER IX

YOUTH AND FREEDOM

Arrived at home, the colonel found that the Honorable Eustace Burton had not been able to leave the office. "The johnnie who knew about the papers" had not returned. The colonel was in bad humor. The domestic barometer was set for stormy weather, and the whole household was aware of it. Hubert, however, preoccupied with his heart affairs, paid but slight attention to the sign. It was his brother Edward who inadvertently precipitated the outburst. He had come across young René out after pigeons.

"Had a bag full of them, too. Clever young beggar he is for such a youngster."

"He's going on seventeen," volunteered Charlotte.

"He talks like seventy. You ought to hear him roast the Indian Department. But he won't vote with the radicals, not he, sound lad! May his breed increase. I'm fairly sick of these Jacobins."

"You have cause to be, my son," said the colonel, "since apparently they have invaded your own family."

"The family, Henry? What do you mean?" inquired his wife hastily.

"Ask your eldest son," said the colonel, his voice shaking with suppressed rage.

"Hubert? Why, what do you mean?"

"You may well ask. That such a thing could have been I could not have believed. Had I heard the announcement from any other lips than his own I should have repudiated the statement as an infamous and disgraceful lie. But this day, in the presence of a large concourse of my fellow citizens, I was humiliated as never before in my life by hearing my own son declare his allegiance to a party which in my judgment stands for all that is disloyal, traitorous, and subversive of good government in this country."

"Why, Henry? What do you mean? Hubert?"

"Hubert? Yes, Hubert! I do not wonder that you are horrified and astounded, my dear."

"But what happened? Do be a little more explicit, Henry."

"Explicit, my dear? How can I be more explicit? This afternoon, as I have said, your son, sitting there at my table, declared his allegiance to the party of Jacobins that threaten the very existence of this country."

"Still I don't understand. How did it come about?"

"In seeking to uncover some of the misdeeds of that beast Swayzie," said Hubert savagely.

"Beast, sir? Please guard your language."

"He is a beast, a reptile, as I happen to know from his transactions that have come under my notice. In seeking to show up his outrageous and dishonest attempt to cover up his misdeeds I announced that I had voted for Mr. Weekes in the last election. I can't say that I quite see the crime in that."

"You can't? By that act you identify yourself with that party which for years, as I consider, has pursued a course of wilful obstruction, of antagonism to the government, which ultimately will lead to revolution, possibly to absorption in the thirteen rebel states of America."

"Not necessarily, sir. In that last election I felt that Mr. Weekes was a better man than his opponent Swayzie, and I think you will agree with me in that, sir."

"I do not champion Mr. Swayzie. But I do contend that that man Weekes has pursued a most dangerous course and advocated measures that are most revolutionary."

"I can't think of any that are so, sir."

"I am not going to enter into a discussion of these matters with you, but I will recall to you one among many. He has publicly advocated the granting full status of regularly ordained clergy to those ignorant ranting creatures that go about deceiving the people and leading them to desert their church."

"You mean the Wesleyans, sir?"

"Yes, sir, the Methodists. 'Low fellows,' John Graves Simcoe called them on an occasion, and I fully agree with him."

"I heartily and totally disagree with Mr. John Graves Simcoe

in this as in many other matters of religion and of politics. I know, and we all know, that many of the finest people in this country —I can name off hand a dozen families of the very finest type— are Methodists. I don't need to give you their names, for you know them as well as I do." For the first time in the discussion Hubert's eyes were flashing and his voice vibrating with passion.

"Gently, Hubert dear," said his mother with quiet dignity. "We all know many of our neighbors who, while not church people, are quite respectable and very excellent people."

"That is not the point," exclaimed the colonel with heat, "as you must very well know. I am not speaking of the rank and file, but of their leaders, their so-called preachers, who unlawfully arrogate to themselves the full rights of regularly ordained clergy. How can we hope to preserve religion in this country against all the ungodliness and atheism threatening us if these fellows are given the privileges and status of ministers of religion? Such people as that fellow Mallory, for instance. The man should be confined, if all reports are true. A disloyal fellow."

"They have their orders from John Wesley."

"Orders from Wesley? What authority can those orders have? But I'm not going to enter into any discussion with you on these matters. I am simply saying that I am totally opposed to Mr. Weekes and to his measures, and that I consider that I have been humiliated to-day by your open declarations of allegiance to him."

"I am sorry, sir, to have offended you, but I can't help preferring Mr. Weekes to that fellow Swayzie, sir."

"It is not wholly a matter of persons, but you yourself to-day in my hearing declared your opposition to the government of this country, which you defamed and slandered."

"Slandered, sir?"

"Slandered, sir. You described the government as dishonest and inefficient. Did you not?"

"I simply said——"

"Did you or did you not?"

"I did say the government is inefficient and dishonest, and I have the facts. You saw yourself the other day how the Indians have been treated, robbed and——"

"That will do, sir."

"Will you not allow me to——"

"No, sir. Be silent. I am not going to discuss nor will I allow you to discuss these matters at this table."

"But, Papa——" began Mrs. Brookes.

"Now, my dear, will you please not to intervene. I do not wish any further discussion at this table."

"Very well, sir," said Hubert.

"And let me say finally that I hope we shall have no more of this revolutionary sort of thing in this family."

"But——"

"Hubert, will you oblige me by dropping this discussion?" said his mother quietly.

"Certainly, Mother, if you call it discussion."

"Leave the room, sir!" thundered the colonel.

Hubert rose at once from the table.

"I beg your pardon, sir. I should not have spoken that way, and I apologize." With face pale and lips trembling, the boy left the room.

The remainder of the dinner was eaten in silence. The gravity of the issue raised was felt by all. The cleavage of opinion in their own family only reflected the state of opinion throughout the whole colony. The cleavage was fundamental.

After family prayers, which he conducted with the same unction and dignity as characterized his reading of the lesson of a Sunday morning in church, the colonel retired to his office and was seen no more for that evening.

"I do wish Hubert had not been so rash," said the mother. "I'm afraid your father is very deeply hurt. Hubert need not have publicly championed that radical Weekes."

"But he believes Weekes is in the right, Mother," said Edward, "and he has a right to his opinion—though, mind you, I'm with Father in this. I stand for the government, though I hate its methods. But these fellows—Weekes, Willcocks, Thorpe, and that lot—get too much of their politics from across the river for me."

CHAPTER X

THE RAISING BEE

It was a glorious September day. The fields, brown and yellow, shorn of their crops, lay resting in the satisfaction of a task well done. The apple orchards, still green, but flushed with the red of ripening fruit, the grapevines, running wild over snake fences or trained in trim beauty over trellised arbors, heavy with their purple clusters, were slowly drinking their last lingering draughts of mellow nectar from the golden chalice of the ardent sun, hanging high in the unclouded blue of heaven, a ball of molten, quivering gold, red in the smoky air. A day when the River of Life ran full to its banks in the deep joy of hopes fulfilled.

So at least it felt to the girls, Charlotte and her friend Nell Burch, sitting upright in perfect bliss upon the front seat of the Brookeses' democrat by the side of the colonel, in whose skilful hands the prize bays drummed rhythmic music on the dusty road. The Brookeses, with the Honorable Eustace, were on their way to the Radcliffes' raising bee. Edward and Hubert had ridden on earlier in the day. Neighbors on foot, on horseback, and in various conveyances were on their way to the bee.

A young fellow, superbly mounted, lifted his hat and drew in ahead as he cantered past.

"That's Harry Marcle," announced Charlotte to Eustace. "Isn't he lovely?"

"Fine mount, begad!" said Eustace.

"But who is the grenadier in front, eh?"

"Grenadier!" said the colonel. "He wouldn't thank you. Look at the swing of his kilt. That, sir, is Dr. Hector MacCrimmon, late of His Majesty's Highland Regiment, the Seventy-second, I think. He served in the Revolutionary War, studied for the

Church, something went amiss, took his medical degree, then went soldiering. Best doctor in the colony. A piper too, none better. But, poor chap, he is his own worst enemy."

"Is he very poor, Mamma?" asked Charlotte.

"No, not poor. If only he—— He has a lovely garden and orchard in the village, where he lives with a dear little old lady, Miss Elspeth, his sister. Poor man!"

"Why 'poor' Mamma?"

"Hush, dear! You don't understand."

The salutation which the old Highlander swept the Brookeses as they passed was worthy of the best days of Highland chivalry.

"I say!" exclaimed Eustace under his breath. "Gorgeous old chieftain, eh what?"

"A splendid man, marvelously skilful doctor. Poor fellow!" replied the colonel.

From the Radcliffes the party received a warm welcome.

"Ah, Colonel, it is very good of you to come to our raising. Mrs. Brookes, this is a great honor! And Miss Charlotte too! Say! I'm real glad and proud to see you all."

"Glad to see you, Radcliffe. You have a fine day for your raising and a fine crowd too," replied the colonel heartily.

"Yes, indeed. It's very good of my neighbors," said Mr. Radcliffe.

"Ah, well! Good neighbors make good neighbors," said the colonel. "You have met my friend, Mr. Eustace Burton from England?"

"Yes, we are glad to know Mr. Burton," replied Mr. Radcliffe.

"Ah, my dear Mrs. Radcliffe," said the colonel, turning to that lady, "we need not ask after your health, and Miss Hope. How charming you look, my dear. Really, our young men will be in great danger to-day—eh, Mr. Burton?"

"Grave danger, sir," said Eustace, coming to Hope's side. "Really, you know, the colonel has a wonderful eye."

"The colonel is an old dear but a sad flatterer," said Hope, turning to greet Mrs. Brookes and Charlotte.

"Now, Miss Hope," said Eustace, "will you take pity on an Old Country man and explain the mysteries of this bee? Miss

Charlotte has given me up as hopeless. My mind is in a wild confusion between bees and rafters and corners and plates."

"Oh, there's René!" cried Charlotte. "He knows. He'll tell you. I'll call him."

"Ah, your friend, eh? Wild-looking chap. Rather like an Indian, what?"

Charlotte's head went up.

"Now, Miss Charlotte, don't get crusty," said Eustace, patting her on the shoulder.

"René! René! Come here!" she cried.

The boy turned and looked at her.

"René, come here at once! This is Mr. Eustace Burton from England," said Charlotte, with quite an air. "Mr. Burton, this is René."

The boy at one swift glance took in the young man, in all the splendor of his English clothes, stiffened, bowed haughtily.

"Ah, René, charmed!" said Eustace, offering a limp hand. "Hello! I say! By Jove!" The Honorable Eustace was looking at his limp, pale fingers. "What the deuce? I say! I'll be jolly well ready for you the next time, young fellow."

Instantly René offered his hand again. Next moment the two locked hands and held on, straining every nerve, without a word. The Englishman's florid face took on a deeper hue. The veins in his forehead stood out like cords. But without a word, without the quiver of an eyelash, he held his grip. René's dark face grew a shade paler, his jaws were as if carved in stone. Suddenly he took a step nearer, put the weight of his body into his grip. Slowly but surely his opponent's wrist began to turn.

"René, stop it!" cried Charlotte sharply. Still the grip held.

"Hello, you chaps!" cried the colonel, arrested by his daughter's sharp exclamation. "What do you think you're doing?" At his word the two fell apart.

"My word!" exclaimed Eustace. "Haven't had such a jolly go since I left the Guards. How did you get that, eh? I say, old chap, you'll have to show me that grip. What? Awfully glad to know you." Once more he offered his hand with an admiring smile on his face.

René took his hand with a shamed face. 'The Indians taught

me," he said. "They are always turning wrists. It's just a trick. I took advantage of you. It's all in the way you stand. You take a step this way and put your weight into it."

"By Jove! That's something to take back home, eh what? I'll turn them all down when I get back to London."

"Let us move along," said the colonel. "The line-up will soon be on."

Hope explained the "line-up." It was the Front, including the dwellers in the villages of Niagara and Queenstown and along the River Road, against all comers from the Back country, the Bushwhackers as they were named.

"Of course, you see, the logs are to be neatly fitted at the corners. Every log first in place counts a point. The real racing begins when you come to the rafters. Each rafter must be pinned to the plate, you understand."

The Honorable Eustace gazed at her in hopeless bewilderment. "Not in the very least, my dear Miss Hope."

"Oh, well, just wait, and you will soon get the hang of it. And now girls," continued Hope, addressing Charlotte and a group of her young friends, "I have sad news for you all. You see that tree? Well, not one of you can go beyond it. And what's worse, I shan't be able to see a bit of the race, because I shall have to watch you."

"But we won't go beyond the tree, Hope. We promise you sure as death!" asserted Nell Burch.

"Truly?"

The oath was given by each and all, sadly but solemnly.

"Oh, look there!" exclaimed Charlotte. "See that Tommy Tickle stealing our pins!" Her accusing finger indicated a red-haired youth surreptitiously removing some pins from the Bushwhackers' pile.

"René! René!" she shrieked, running forward and pointing to the thief. At her shrill cry René turned and saw Tommy.

"Here you, Tommy! Bring those back!" Tommy began to beat a retreat.

"Sandy McComb!" cried René, leveling his finger at the purloining Tommy. Like a thunderbolt Sandy, pin monkey for the Bushwhackers, launched himself at the enemy, hurled him supine

among pins, scooped up a double handful, and placed them in triumph upon his own pile.

"Them ain't all yourn!" wailed the discomfited Tommy.

"Come and get 'em!" dared Sandy.

"They ain't all hisn!" lamented Tommy, appealing to René.

"Serves you right, Tommy. Come! Git out! Scat! Go for him, Sandy!"

Sandy leaped for him. Tommy fled, followed by the jeers of the girls of both sides.

"Wait, René!" cried Charlotte, dashing off to the Brookeses' wagon and returning with her nut bag.

"Here! Take this for your pins, René."

The boy hesitated. The pins he carried as a rule in his pockets and in his shirt.

"By jinks, I guess this bag will be the thing." He took the bag from the little girl. "You're a brick," he said as Charlotte turned to her company.

"Why, Charlotte Brookes, you're not a Bushwhacker," said Hope in surprise.

"I am to-day!"

"But Hubert and Edward are for the Front."

"I don't care!" said Charlotte stoutly.

"I know why," said Nell, nodding eagerly.

Charlotte threw her a baleful glance.

"Why?" said Eustace.

"It's——"

"Shut up, Nell Burch!" snapped Charlotte, her face crimson.

"It's——"

"You dare!" exclaimed Charlotte, springing toward her friend with such fury in her eyes that Nell fell back in confused silence.

"Your old bag won't be any good anyway," she said sulkily.

But Charlotte was too angry to make answer.

The two sides were speedily lined up for the choosing of the leaders. On the side of the Front Alan McNab, a tall, lank man with the quiet, determined face of a leader, was chosen captain, and opposite to him for the Bushwhackers Billy Bates, otherwise Billy "Badger"—so named for his experience with a badger which he hunted to its hole, and which, with a knife as his

sole weapon, he had drawn forth to death to the sore laceration of his person.

To the captains fell the duty of selecting the subordinate officers: "pin men," who were to pin the rafters through appropriate augur holes to the plate; "purline men," who were to ride the purline and so aid in placing the rafters; "corner men," weirdly skilled with the ax in fitting the logs into their notches at the corners. The boys were "pin monkeys," whose duty it was to carry, throw, pass, guard, steal pins as circumstances might demand.

The raising boss was Black Biggar, a bearded giant whose word ran as law and whose decree was final.

"Choose your men!" ordered Black Biggar.

"Ed Brookes, pin man," cried Alan McNab. "Hubert Brookes, Hugh Talbot, Frank Nelles, Ezra Servos, Hank Fane."

"Let's see," said Billy Badger, casting his eye over the company of Bushwhackers. "Here, you, René! You're a cross between a wildcat and a Mohawk. You'll do for pin man. Ben Burch, Jake Haines, Murdie Ruagh ['Red' from his flaming head], Art Clench, Tom Heron."

The rest of the men took position along the foundation of the new building, ready to lift the first log into place.

Black Biggar shouted his final instructions.

"Now, then, be careful of them rafters. We don't want no man killed. Watch your corners. Every log must ride true and every pin be druv home. Git to it!"

Like wildcats they leaped at the logs. The corners had been carefully fitted beforehand and numbered, but in spite of all precautions there was still some fine ax work to be done. The lifting and fitting of the logs into their places caused only mild excitement, inasmuch as the fitting took time and care and skill rather than speed. It served the Front an occasion for a cheer when their first log lay first in place on the foundation. Each log first in place counted a point. Beyond the altitude of six feet the logs were shoved up to place on long skids by pike poles. The slip of a pike pole might mean broken heads below. By four o'clock the walls were finished, the top plates laid, bents and

ridge poles securely in place. There remained only the rafters. In points the two sides were exactly equal. The race for the rafters would be fiercely contested.

"Men, to your places!" shouted Black Biggar. Pin men, plate men, purline men swarmed up to their respective positions. Pin monkeys stood ready to pass up pins at need. Girls and women stood watching for the start.

"Ready!" cried Black Biggar. "Let 'er rip!"

At the word a rafter was caught up by the men on the ground, flung lancewise upon the plate, seized by the plate men, passed up to the purline men, fitted into its notch in the plate. The pin was entered and—*Bing! Bang!* Two blows of René's hatchet—driven home.

"Good boy, René!" First rafter on the roof! First blood! A wild yell from the Bushwhackers, pierced by the shrill screams of Charlotte, Nell, and their sympathizers, dancing madly in their places of observation below. Alas! The second rafter brought disaster. Too fierce a thrust sent the rafter over the plate, the upper end caught under instead of over the purline and there stuck.

"Back! Back!" yelled René, flinging himself down on the plate. With the aid of the plate man he pushed the rafter along the plate clear of the purline, lifted it into place, drove it up to the ridge, fitted it into its notch, reached for his pin. Horrors! An untrimmed knot on the rafter—curse it!—caught the fastening of Charlotte's precious nut bag, too frail for such desperate ventures, and ripped it free. A cry of dismay! The bag with its treasure of pins fell cluttering from the roof to earth inside the building. A wild cry of dismay tore from René's lips. Two people heard René's cry—Tommy Tickle and Charlotte. The former dashed through the door, victory vivid before him; the latter dashed after Tommy, vengeance flaming in her soul. Upon the triumphant raider, stealing out through the back window, bag in hand, fell a shrieking mænad. Clawing fingers wreathed themselves in his thick red poll and hurled the startled Tommy crashing backward to earth.

"Gimme that bag, you little thief!" shrieked the girl.

"Take it! Take it!" cried Tommy, flinging the bag from him with one hand, the other shielding his face from the menacing claws threatening his eyes.

"Oh, you thief! You thief!" gasped Charlotte. Snatching the bag, she turned, met René at the door, and thrust the bag into his hands.

"Good girl! Oh, good girl!" said the boy. He snatched her to him, kissed her on the lips, caught up the bag, emptied the pins into his shirt bosom, and swarmed up the corner of the building to his place, where he found three rafters in their notches waiting his pins. Forty-five minutes of wild, raging, smooth-working confusion, and the last rafter from each side struck the plate at the same instant, slipped together into their notches, took the last drive on their pins together.

"Down! Down!" yelled the crowd below, with manifold and profane objurgations. Already from ridge, purline, and plate all had dropped to earth. Together René and Edward Brookes left the plate. Last man down would lose the race. Hand over hand Edward scrambled down the logs jutting from the corner. But René, flinging his ax before him, seized the topmost log, swung himself clear of the corner, and dropped to earth. First down by a breath!

"Let me go, boys!" he gasped. "Billy, let me down!" he implored. He might have cried to the winds as well. Round the building his men bore him high in their hands, a roaring, raging, yelling mob, and off to the tubs set for their ablutions.

"Billy! Billy! Listen to me! For God's sake, Billy. Listen to me!" panted René dragging the frenzied, gyraling Billy Badger off to one side.

"Billy. Stop yelling! Listen to me! We didn't win!"

"What? You bet your sox we won! You dropped first!" shouted Billy, off on his mad dance again. But René clung to him.

"Billy! Won't you listen, please?" entreated René.

"What's eatin' you?" said Billy, halted at last.

"I didn't—I don't think I got one of those pins home!"

"What? What pin?" Billy's voice sank low.

"The fourth pin, I think, Billy. It stuck. I couldn't get it home!"

"Oh, shucks!" said Billy.

"Billy, I don't think it got home!"

"Hish! Hish!" said Billy. "Let her go! It's all right."

"Let me go up and look at it, Billy!"

"Oh, shut up! Don't be a fool, René. You got it all right."

"Sure you did, René," said Ed Brookes, coming up to congratulate him.

René stood, misery in his eyes as he looked his captain in the face.

"What's up?" said Ed. "You dropped first! What's wrong?"

"Oh," said Billy with a desperate oath, "René got some fool idea that one pin didn't get home."

"Hello!" cried a man, coming up to the group. "What's this? Pin not druv home?" The men swarmed about with varied cries.

"What's the matter? Some shenanigan, eh? Cheatin', eh?"

"Cheatin'?" roared Billy. "Who said cheatin'? The man that says cheatin' is a liar. Who said it?" he demanded, glaring red-eyed upon the crowd. There was a dead silence.

"Biggar, come here!" he shouted, waving his hand wildly. "Stand back there, you!" he said, throwing men from him.

"What's up, Billy?" said Black Bigger, pushing through the crowd. "You look all het up."

"Biggar," said Billy, sobering down, "you got to go up and look at a pin there. René here says he thinks it ain't druv home." There was no hiding the disgust in his tone.

"Pin? What pin?"

"That there fourth pin, he says." Billy's description of the pin was sufficiently lurid to shrivel it in its hole. "You've got to get up there and take a look at it."

"Rules is rules," said Biggar. Up the corner he went, followed by René hatchet in hand.

The men gathered close about the corner, the women and girls crowding in behind them. They waited in silence.

"What pin is it?" inquired Biggar.

René pointed to the fourth pin.

"Gimme your ax!" The pin was quite obviously sticking up in the air; everyone could see it now. Biggar struck it a sharp blow. It was immovable. He leaned over and viewed the hole from beneath. The pin was undoubtedly not home. He seized the rafter,

wrenched at it. It remained solidly fixed. With René's help he pried the rafter free, enlarged the notch, fitted it back into its slot, and drove the pin home.

He stood upright on the plate, looking down upon the faces turned upward toward him.

"The rafter might 'a' held all right, I guess, but," he added with deliberate emphasis, "the pin wasn't druv home." A sound like the sigh of wind in a pine tree swept the crowd.

"Hold on a minute, Biggar." It was Ed Brookes's voice. "If we're going to be so mighty particular you might as well take a look at the last three or four pins on my side."

"All right, we'll make a job of it since we're at it."

Biggar made his way along the plate to the other side of the building. The company followed and stood waiting.

"Which pins, Edward?"

"The last three or four there."

Biggar stood for a few moments looking down upon the doubtful pins, leaned over and viewed them from beneath, tapped them gently, then with vigorous blows drove them down hard.

Once more he stood erect upon the plate while the people below waited in breathless silence.

"These here pins could have been druv a bit further, but I count 'em good enough to pass and I'm a-goin' to give the race to Alan McNab."

"No, Mr. Biggar!" spoke up Alan quickly, anticipating the cheers from the Front. "I would prefer——"

"Do you challenge my decision?" roared Black Biggar.

"No, sir! But seeing that there are defects on both sides," replied Alan calmly in his precise Highland speech, "I would suggest that you give it a draw."

"I give it a win for the Front," declared Black Biggar in a loud, clear voice. "Take it or leave it, as you please."

"Quite right, Mr. Biggar," said old Colonel Nelles in his high, squeaky voice. "And if you will allow me I should like to say that there is something better than winning a race, and this, sir, we have seen to-day."

CHAPTER XI

"THE PURITY OF THE BENCH"

As THE men were taking their places with well-simulated and polite hesitation at the tables René was making his way toward the stable where Gyp was housed, intending to take himself off home with all speed. A hail from Charlotte halted him.

"Where are you going, René? Oh, wasn't it splendid? And did you hear what Colonel Nelles said? Hope says he meant——"

"Oh, quit it, the old fool!" said René gloomily.

"But she did. She said——"

"Stop it!" René ordered.

"But she——"

"Will you shut up?" said the boy savagely, hurrying off to the stable.

The girl stood looking after him, astonishment, dismay, grief, rage, in turn, overwhelming her. Hastily turning, she ran into Eustace.

"Where's that hero of yours?" cried Eustace gaily.

"Don't know and don't care," said Charlotte, fighting back the tears from her eyes.

"Ah! I am—I thought I saw him going this way." But Charlotte fled from him. Wondering greatly, he moved on toward the stable and met the boy at the door.

"Whither away, young man?" he inquired.

René made no answer, busying himself with his saddle girths.

"Where are you going, René?" said Eustace again.

"To hell, for all I care," replied the boy. Eustace, with a swift glance at his face, walked quietly toward the colt's head.

"By Jove! Fine colt that!" he said. "Well bred. Who is her sire?"

"Soracen," replied René gruffly.

"Sorry, never heard of that horse. Must be a good one, what?"

"Kentucky horse!" said René, mollified in spite of himself. "Racing stock."

"Jove! What withers for a colt! But I have a message for you, young man. You are wanted at a special table. Lucky beggar you are and——"

"I'm going home," said René.

"You are invited by a lady to dine."

"I'm going home. They won't make a fool of me. I made a fool of myself enough already."

"Tut! tut! Miss Hope wants to see you. In fact, wants you to help her at the children's table."

René stood glowering at the evening sky.

"No! Tell Miss Hope I'm sorry but I must go. That old fool!"

"What old fool? Miss Hope? Oh, shame!"

René glared savagely at him, threw his leg over Gyp, and rode away without another word.

"Pleasant young cub!" Eustace remarked in making his report. "Seemed rather out with the world. Who is the 'old fool,' Miss Hope?"

"I know," said Charlotte. "He meant Colonel Nelles. He called him an old fool to me."

"To you, Charlotte? When, pray?" But Charlotte's chin was in the air, and she had no further information to give.

"Never mind, Charlotte, we will ask Mr. Eustace to come to our table."

"Alas and alack! Woe! Grief! Lamentations! Dash the luck! I am designated to the potables. In other words, I am placed by your respected mamma in charge of the wine cellar. Chief butler to the bee! And having sampled the various vintages consigned to my care—to wit: brandies, cherry and peach; wine, rhubarb, raspberry, and elderberry; beers, maple and birch with a noble keg of apple cider of last year's vintage, as a base—I am expecting entirely satisfactory and surprising results."

Hope shook her head at him. "You must be careful. You know we never have at our bees whisky or beer or anything like that. Mamma would be shocked. At least Papa would."

"Ah! I know. Then must we be discreet."

"Can't you get a substitute? Can't you beg off?" said Hope.

"Don't tempt me beyond my strength. Your mamma has gathered from some unfortunate remarks, which in an unhappy moment I let fall, that I have gifts in mingling the rosy and that sort of thing. So duty! Point of honor! And all that. Roman guard! What? This is a gloomy hour!"

"Why so, may I ask?" said Hubert, who had come up. "The very best possible, I should say."

"Tell him. I cannot. Farewell! Duty and the potables summon me! Impress this fortunate young man." He waved a sad good-bye and was gone.

"What can I do for you, Hope?" said Hubert.

"Nothing, I fear. You can't be spared from the supper table. Why did you run away?"

"To see you for a moment. After supper can't you get off for a little walk or something?"

"Why, Hubert, how absurd, with all these people to look after!"

"But after they are gone, Hope?"

"Why! The camp meeting! I must run now."

"Camp meeting? You going?"

"Of course. It's the last night—that is, week night. I must go."

"Then let's go together. I shall hate it, but if you are going . . ."

"Oh, we shall all be going together, you know—the Burches, the McKendricks, Saddlers, Talbots, Haineses."

"Hope, you can't go with them all. Let us ride together."

"Then there's Mr. Swayzie. Friend of yours, I understand! Shouldn't be surprised if he were going," said Hope, with a wicked twinkle in her eye.

"Swayzie? Oh, there he is," said Hubert. "Old shyster! You're going with him, I suppose."

"Well, of course, he hasn't asked me—yet."

"Oh, Hope, don't be mean. Anyway, I shall get your pony for you."

"Good-bye! Must run, Hubert."

Hubert turned back toward the supper table.

"There's Swayzie edging toward the colonel. Some mischief's afoot, I'll bet."

He was greeted with shouts by his friends. "Come along, Hubert! You're missin' a lot! What are you up to, anyway? One thing at a time, Hubert!"

The supper, for abundance and variety of viands, was on a scale of magnificence never seen in the colony till that date. Fish from Niagara and the lake, venison, bear meat, wild fowl from the forest, pigeon and partridge done into pasties, wild fruits from the *brûlé,* other fruits from garden and orchard done into conserves and pies in bewildering assortment were set before the guests. The splendor of later feasts in the home district was estimated for many a day in comparison with that of the Radcliffe raising. Hubert took his place beside Hector MacCrimmon, who was daintily picking his way through the many dishes placed before him.

"A noble feast, Mr. Hubert," he said, "worthy the pen of a Martial or Lucan. And a noble company. Here mingle all the finest elements in our human nature. Courage, gentleness, courtesy, with simplicity and genuine sincerity."

"Yes, indeed. The people of this province are of the best; if only we could assure all of them their rights."

"True, Mr. Hubert, but on the whole they live in comfort and in peace with one another. Look round this hospitable board. See how they mingle in mutual amity and respect. We are a fortunate people. Consider our war-stricken home land, threatened with invasion."

"Invasion? Surely that's over since Trafalgar, sir, is it not?"

"Temporarily, yes. But there is no security. Think of Austerlitz and Ulm. The latest news is very disturbing, just come by the last packet. Jena! Have you heard? No? Prussian army annihilated at Jena. Serve them right, you say. In a way, yes, but none the less a terrifying disaster for us. We shall hear no more of Prussia for years to come." MacCrimmon's deep, resonant voice carried far down the table to the ear of Colonel Brookes, seated at the head.

"Prussia, did you say, Mr. MacCrimmon?" inquired the colonel. "Have you late advices?"

"Very grave indeed, sir. A most disastrous overthrow of her armies. Jena will rank in history with Austerlitz and Ulm."

"Do you say so? God help old England!" said Colonel Nelles.

"Never fear for England, sir, so long as her people are true to themselves," said Colonel Brookes. "But let us not dishonor our hosts' most generous hospitality. And, Mr. Radcliffe, perhaps you will allow me the honor of proposing as our first toast the health of his most gracious Majesty the King. Gentlemen, your glasses! The King, God bless him." With cheers three times three the toast was drunk.

The next hour was spent in toasts and speeches in rapid succession, in response to the call of the colonel, the hilarity of the company bearing eloquent tribute to the potency of the brew mixed by the Honorable Eustace, until Mr. Radcliffe, becoming somewhat anxious for his house's reputation for sobriety, suggested to the chairman that a final toast to the ladies might be appropriate. The chairman, at once concurring, called upon old Colonel Nelles, famed as an after-dinner speaker, who performed this duty in a manner worthy of his highest reputation. Breaking up into groups, the company distributed themselves upon the grass under the trees, smoking, chaffing, jesting, according to their humor.

It fell to Mr. Swayzie, a strictly temperate man, to introduce a jarring note. Mr. Swayzie's usual caution had been somewhat undermined by many mugs of last year's cider laced with Mrs. Radcliffe's cherry brandy, the final touch, however, being imparted by a nip from Billy Badger's private flask. Pulling from his pocket the latest issue of the *Guardian,* he handed it to Hubert, pointed to the leading editorial, and said, "What do you think of that, sir, in a British colony?"

"What paper?" said Hubert. "Oh, the *Guardian.*" The inflamed state of mind in the country was apparent from the tense silence that immediately fell upon the company.

"What appears to be wrong with that, Mr. Swayzie?" said Hubert, after glancing through the editorial.

"Wrong, sir? I am surprised at you, sir. It is damnable!" Mr. Swayzie's accustomed reticence had been badly shattered by the

combined potables furnished by the Honorable Eustace and Billy Badger.

"Read it, Hubert!" said a voice.

"No! This is no place to introduce partisan politics. It would be highly improper."

Handing the paper to Dr. MacCrimmon, he asked, "What do you think, Doctor?" Glancing hurriedly through the editorial the doctor passed the paper back to Mr. Swayzie, for whom he had but the slightest regard.

"Mr. Swayzie, sir, in my judgment it would be highly improper to introduce any contentious theme, much less a theme strongly savoring of party politics into such a happy gathering of friendly neighbors."

"What is it all about, Doctor, if I may ask?" inquired Colonel Brookes.

"The *Gazette* challenges the propriety of Judge Thorpe's sitting upon the McBride case."

"Hear, hear!" exclaimed the colonel warmly.

"The *Guardian* asserts the perfect right of Judge Thorpe to act."

"What do you think now, Doctor, man to man, ashide from all politish. Doctor's like me—no party polishion. What I shay ish to hell with party politish and to hell with the government. Ain't thash so, Doctor?" said Billy Badger.

"Gentlemen, may I dismiss this subject with the single remark that while no one can challenge the right of Judge Thorpe to preside, all fair-minded men would question the propriety of Judge Thorpe, the leader of the Opposition, sitting in judgment upon this case—most improper."

"Doctor, thash me. Three cheers for the ol' doctor."

"Swashie, you're mosh improper—in fac', Swashie, you're drunk. Go 'way, Swashie—at once—ought to be removed." Billy swayed toward Mr. Swayzie with the evident intention of removing him forthwith, with the result that the little man hastily withdrew from Billy's neighborhood.

"And now, gentlemen," continued MacCrimmon, having disposed of another tumbler of home-made brew, "may I further be permitted to add that it appears to be the duty of all good citi-

zens of this country in view of the present situation in the home land and in view of the strained relations that unhappily prevail between the British government and that of the neighboring republic—it is the duty I say of all loyal citizens to maintain a judicial attitude of mind, to cease from partisan strife, and to strive in every way to strengthen the hands of all who are seeking to maintain and defend the integrity of our empire. The latest news from the continent of Europe is gravely disquieting. That dangerous and monstrous despot, the Emperor of the French, has practically the whole of Europe prostrate at his feet, with the exception of Prussia, which, being helpless to oppose him, leaves Great Britain the sole defender of freedom and of the rights of mankind. Let us then stand together in this colony and strive to eliminate all causes of strife by mutual forbearance and consideration."

"Bully for MacCrimmon!" shouted Billy Badger, who was momentarily losing command of his powers of locomotion and of clear speech and was clinging affectionately to Black Biggar for support. "I conshider that a mosh able esposhishn of the whole question. 'Stronary eshposis and I shay, 'Bully for old MacCrimmon and bully for old *Guardian* and to hell with the government.' Thash what I shay. I'm fair to every man, give every man fair show."

"Com' on, Billy," said Black Biggar, dragging him away, "we'll go home."

"Home? Not for me. I'm a-goin' to camp meetin'. Promised my friend I'd go to camp meetin'. Swayzie," suddenly seizing the little man by the arm, "you go to camp meetin' too. Swayzie, you mush go to camp meetin'. You going to hell fash. Straight ash string. Better go to camp meetin', Swayzie, and get converted. Mush get converted. Com' on, Swayzie."

Swayzie, however, shook himself free and made off hastily, followed by the delighted laughter of the company.

"Com' on," continued Billy, embracing the whole company with the wave of his arm. "Lesh all go. All aboard for camp meetin'! You comin', Dr. MacCrimmon?"

"Mr. Badger," said Dr. MacCrimmon with solemn gravity, "your moral and spiritual condition suggests the necessity of a

sound conversion. Your physical condition suggests the propriety of a period of repose. As for me, I am expecting to proceed to the camp meeting with my friend Colonel Brookes."

"With me?" cried the colonel. "I wasn't aware of such an arrangement."

"Colonel! I'm making the arrangement at the present moment," said MacCrimmon solemnly. "A camp meeting is something which I suspect would greatly benefit most of you gentlemen."

"I deeply regret," said the colonel, "that I am under the necessity of driving my family home, sir, otherwise I should be pleased indeed——"

As ill luck would have it, his son Edward came sauntering by at that very moment in eager conversation with Hope Radcliffe.

"Ah," said MacCrimmon, "a kind providence sends your son to your help, Colonel. He will relieve you of the responsibility of caring for your family."

"What's that, Dr. MacCrimmon?" inquired Edward.

"Your father is anxious to accompany me this evening to the camp meeting, so called, but feels himself under the necessity of conducting his family home."

Edward glanced at his father's face, then grinned wickedly. "Certainly, Dr. MacCrimmon, I shall take the family home. Father, you can have my horse. He is in the stable."

"It is the will of the Lord, Colonel!" said MacCrimmon solemnly.

"Oh, very well," said the colonel with a disgusted glance at his son. "Whenever you are ready, sir."

"In about half an hour then, Colonel," said MacCrimmon. "Meantime I shall make my adieus to our hosts."

His way led him past the table where the Honorable Eustace was still presiding over the dispensing of stirrup cups to departing guests. Dr. MacCrimmon received a large tumbler of cherry brandy and cider, which appeared to give the final touch to his rapidly increasing inability to preserve an even keel in his progress toward the front door where Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe were saying farewell to their departing neighbors.

"Your arm, Colonel," he said.

The colonel took his arm with the firm intention of finding some opportunity of ridding himself of a most unpleasant responsibility. As MacCrimmon was making his adieus to Mr. Radcliffe the colonel quietly took the opportunity of enlisting the aid of Mrs. Radcliffe.

"Our friend here," he said, "would be the better of a little quiet sleep. He has extracted a promise from me to accompany him to the camp meeting, but obviously——"

"Leave him to me," said Mrs. Radcliffe. "We will look after him. Never fear. We will see that he gets safely home. We are delighted that you have been able to come to our bee, Colonel."

As the colonel was engaged with her husband, Mrs. Radcliffe proceeded to beguile Dr. MacCrimmon into the house.

CHAPTER XII

THE CAMP MEETING

The moon was riding high in the September sky when Hubert and Hope, the last of their party from the raising bee, rode into the camp-meeting grove. Along the fences enclosing the grove lines of conveyances were drawn up, comfortable double-seated democrats, buckboards, wagons drawn by horses and by oxen, horse carts and ox carts, ox sleds and a few new-fashioned American buggies, and with these tied to the trees scores of riding horses.

At the gate of the enclosure two stalwart officials kept watch against the entrance of doubtful characters. Patroling the grounds within, a corps of special guards kept those in order who frequented the camp meeting for other than strictly religious purposes.

The meeting ground proper consisted of a rectangular space one hundred and twenty feet by ninety, cleared of all small timber and underbrush, and with only a sufficient number of great pines and hemlocks to provide overhead shelter from the sun. Upon great logs laid at regular intervals planks were placed to provide seats for the congregation. At the corners and at intervals along the sides were light stands. These stood about eight feet high, constructed of green logs, some four feet in length and covered with earth. Upon these were placed heaps of blazing pine knots which afforded sufficient light for the night meetings. A cleared space some ten feet wide surrounded the seated area, and beyond this space, set in among the trees cleared of underbrush, could be seen a large number of huts and cabins set in orderly array, providing dwelling accommodation for the campers who came from a distance.

At one end of the area a covered platform was built for the preachers, and immediately before the platform there was an en-

closed space surrounded with a railing and provided with a low, desklike structure across the whole width of the area. This was called the "penitent bench," set apart for those who under the influence of the preacher's appeal were moved to "go forward" and "seek salvation."

The area provided seating for some five hundred people, and the open space surrounding it would give standing room to some two hundred more.

During the day this open-air temple was suffused with soft lights of palest green, and at night was illuminated with a ruddy glow from the flaming pine knots piled upon the light stands. And a noble temple it was. The tall, clean boles of the mighty pines and hemlocks soaring aloft to their thick, arching canopy of green boughs, the deep carpet of yellow pine needles, the solid walls of massed green shrubbery on every side, and all lighted with the soft green color of diffused sunlight by day and by the lurid glare of the flaming pine knots by night, made a picture of majestic, tender beauty that might well challenge the noble splendor of the stately cathedrals of the home lands across the sea.

The meeting was swinging along in the full tide of emotional power when the last of the party from the Radcliffe raising bee arrived.

Hubert could find seats for Hope and himself only at the extreme rear of the area.

"What a crowd!" he said as they took their places. "Must be five hundred people here. Hello! There are your party over there to the right, Hope. By Jove, old MacCrimmon is with them. How did the old boy get straightened up, I wonder? And here are Billy Badger and Black Biggar beside us. And, look, will you! there's your friend Swayzie, as I'm a sinner."

"Hush, Hubert, the people are looking at you," said Hope. "We are disturbing them."

Hubert began examining the faces of the people about him. Most of them were strangers, almost all backwoods people. Faces sunburned and frostbitten, showing signs of the lean feeding, the privation, the anxiety, the toil, the desperate fight for existence of the early pioneer.

The camp meeting was to these people one great, grand, glow-

ing break in the gray monotony of their lives. Harvest was safely garnered, winter still two months away. There was an interval of ease from toil that might be profitably employed in a great religious festival. Churches were small, few in number, and comfortless. Of regularly settled pastors among the people of the Methodist persuasion there were none. Their place was taken by the Circuit Riders. Heroic souls they were too, these Circuit Riders, even uncouth in manner, unlettered, and crude in speech, but hearty, fearless, indomitable, and with a deep religious passion for the spread of the evangel. To their influence more than to all other influences combined the people of the Western Peninsula and other sections of Upper Canada owed the solidly moral and religious quality of their character which has persisted through four generations.

The meeting to-night was in the hands of an old-time exhorter from across the river, a campaigner with experience of many a religious field of battle, Elijah Slattery by name, tall, spare in form, weather beaten in face, he carried his sixty years with the unbending rigidity of a steel ramrod. His attire consisted of homespun flannel shirt, with white collar and black string tie, a pair of homespun trousers with baggy knees, a long linen duster for a coat. His voice, harsh as a steel rasp, penetrated far into the woods beyond the clearing; his light blue eyes flashed with inward fire, his head, arms, legs, his whole long body gave emphasis to his every utterance. He possessed a ready wit, sharpened to a razor edge in frequent conflict with the graceless spirits that haunted these gatherings, and with this had a truly marvelous gift of torrential speech, pungent, denunciatory speech, reckless of orthography, syntax, or prosody, rich in rude metaphor and simile and flaming with passion. He had a fund of emotional anecdotes, redeemed from utter pathos and vulgarity only by the tremendous intensity of his earnestness. His sermons were for the most part fiercely denunciatory. He would hold his audience by a fragile thread over the brimstone fires of Tophet. He would rack their emotions with deathbed scenes, would tear wide open the secret charnel house of their lusts, hunt them with the pursuing bloodhounds of their past crimes, then with a swift shift of emotional scenery he would lure them with visions of beatific bliss.

Up and down the whole gamut of human emotions he played with rough, rude skill, and at times with overwhelming effect.

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," was his text for the evening, and at the close of every fresh period of eloquence he would thunder forth these words of the ancient prophet of Israel. It was a final appeal, the offer of a last opportunity of salvation to lost souls. To Hubert the whole affair was a ghastly travesty of religion. He was filled with disgust, horror, rage.

"How can decent people of ordinary intelligence stand this thing?" he murmured to Hope beside him. "It is perfectly ghastly."

Hope laid her hand upon his arm.

"Hush!" she said in a low, tense voice. "Look at the people! Look at their faces! What do you see?"

Looking, Hubert began to notice what he had first failed to see.

A tremendous solemnity had settled like a mask upon all alike. Soon Hubert began to distinguish between classes of hearers. Those who had not yet "got religion" were easily distinguishable by the look of uneasiness in their eyes, deepening in many to anxiety. They were not yet "saved." They were exposed to all the terrors of judgment poured forth upon them by the preacher. Their last chance of salvation was fast slipping from them. The frail thread of life alone kept them from the eternal fires of hell. They were exhorted, urged, entreatd to come forward to the penitent bench, confess their sins, and experience instant "salvation."

No one would make the first move. To stand up before those hundreds of eyes, sympathetic, critical, derisive, and acknowledge unworthiness, sin, guilt, and make their painful way to that place of utter self-humiliation called for a higher type of courage than most of them possessed. In vain the preacher urged, pleaded, entreated, threatened. A spirit of stubborn immobility seemed to be abroad. Not a soul would respond.

"He'll never get them. I wouldn't go up there for a farm," said Hubert.

"There are too many strangers to-night. Too many swells from the front," said Hope, a touch of disappointment, almost of bitterness, in her voice.

Hubert glanced at her in amazement. Her accustomed quiet serenity was gone. Her face was disturbed, anxious.

"Do you believe in this sort of thing?" he said.

"Hush!" she said. "You are making it harder for them."

The preacher, skilled in reading signs, suddenly changed his tactics.

"You are resisting the Spirit of God!" he cried. "You are fighting God. You are grieving the Holy Ghost! God have mercy on you! I have done my best. God have mercy upon your poor souls! God have mercy! Have mercy! Oh, my brethren, let us pray for those lost souls who will not come and be saved. Pray for them, you people of God! Pray for them! Down on your knees and pray! pray! pray!" He fell upon his knees. It seemed as if the whole body of the people fell upon their knees, penitent and impenitent alike. Some few there were who for reasons known only to themselves remained sitting.

Immediately on all sides there arose a surging fountain of prayer. Groans, sighs, cries, petitions, lamentations formed an audible accompaniment to the loud voice of the leader, now engaged in an impassioned appeal to the Almighty, which was indeed only another form of appeal to the impenitent souls present.

Gradually the accompaniment of prayer fell into rhythmic cadences repeated in unison: "Come down, Lord! Let the fire fall, Lord! Let the fire fall, Lord!"

Suddenly, in one corner of the area a woman sprang to her feet and, tossing high her arms, shrieked aloud, "Save them, Lord Jesus! They are perishing! They are perishing!" As if she had released a hundred springs with her cry, immediately on every side people sprang to their feet. Wild cries, groans, shoutings filled the air. Soon on every side men, women began to fall in convulsions. Higher and higher rose the leader's voice, entreating the Almighty to break the hearts of the impenitent and unsaved.

The time had come for the registration of this emotional demonstration in definite results.

"Now, before we close this last meeting," said the preacher, "there are many who would like to bear testimony to the love of the dear Lord who has saved them. We shall spend a few min-

utes in giving testimony to the Grace of God. The wonderful, beautiful Grace of God. Who will lead in this service?"

Up sprang a middle-aged man.

"I bless God," he began in a loud voice.

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Hubert. "Old Waggles."

It was Jabez Waggley, once known among the early settlers as a notorious old scamp, but of recent years a reformed, though by no means greatly respected, citizen. In a high singsong voice "old Waggles" began to recount with obvious relish the evil deeds of former days. In detail he related his departures from the path of sobriety and decency. The testimony was quite familiar to his fellow members in the Methodist Communion and apparently excited little interest. There was a distinct lowering of the spiritual temperature.

"I can't stand any more of this," said Hubert.

"Wait, Hubert!" said Hope quietly. "Sit down a few moments. This will pass."

She knew her people and she knew their leaders.

"Look," she said, pointing to the platform.

A slightly built youth with a clean-cut, beautiful face came to the edge of the platform and in a clear smooth-flowing tenor began to sing.

"That's Nathan Bangs," whispered Hope. "Just newly ordained."

The young minister began to sing one of Charles Wesley's hymns, weird and familiar to most of the congregation:

"Terrible thought! shall I alone—
Who may be saved—shall I,
Of all, alas! whom I have known,
Through sin forever die?
While all my old companions dear,
With whom I once did live,
Joyful at God's right hand appear,
A blessing to receive.

"Shall I, amidst a ghastly band,
Dragged to the judgment seat.
Far on the left with horror stand,
My fearful doom to meet?"

A stillness fell upon the people. The prayers, groans, cries were subdued into a low moaning.

A few moments the young preacher stood with uplifted hand, holding them spellbound, then ended his singing with the verse:

"I will accept His offers now,
From every sin depart;
Perform my oft-repeated vow,
And render Him my heart.

"Dear souls, you will accept His offers now, will you not? Come to your Saviour for pardon."

Then in a kind of rapture he broke forth in an old and familiar refrain, the congregation joyously joining in a passion of relief for the terrible tension of impending judgment:

"O Happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God,
Well may this glowing heart rejoice
And tell its raptures all abroad.
Happy day! Happy day!
When Jesus washed my sins away."

"What a day! What a day! All right with men! No bitter feelings! All love and peace and joy!"

"All right with God! No fear of God! No fear of hell! No fear of life! Oh, what a day!"

"Why not to-day? Why not this night?"

"He will be glad to have you, to welcome you."

"Come, young men! Come now!"

Again he led them in song:

"Come, ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known,
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne.
CHORUS: "We're marching to Zion,
Beautiful, beautiful Zion,
We're marching to Zion,
The beautiful City of God."

"Clever chap, by Jove!" muttered Hubert.

"Now, shall we have any further testimonies?" said Mr. Bangs.

A number responded in brief testimonies, given in low, almost inaudible tones.

Then rose a slight, pale-faced, gentle-voiced woman dressed in plain, decent black, rusty with the years. "I thought I was a Christian," she began in a soft low tone that carried to the farthest corner. "I went to church regular. I liked to go to church. I liked my minister, he was awful kind and good to me. I used to say my prayers, and when I wasn't too busy I read the Bible, and I tried to do my duty—but—but—I didn't seem to get much good from it all. There was no joy for me. No help. I was tryin' it all alone —a kind of dull fear all the time in my heart when I thought of God. Then—then—" her voice dropped to a husky whisper that still carried to the very hearts of her listeners—"my little baby was took from me." There was another pause. "I thought God was hard to me. They were all good to me, the neighbors, the minister, my man—oh, all so good to me—but when they said she had gone to Jesus it seemed a kind of big, lonely place, and I was afeard I would never see her again. Oh, that was the worst of all that ever came to me. Then, one night here, last week, the minister was speakin' of Jesus takin' the children in His arms and how He wanted the mothers too. I felt all at once—oh, it all came at once—that He had my baby and that He wanted me, too, and I just came to Him just like He was a friend, and somehow, all at once, I knowed that He loved me too. And now"—her voice grew strong, and she lifted a serene face, shining in the torchlight —"and now life is all different! Just full of peace! The dullness is gone. I'm not afraid of God any more. Oh, no! How could I be afraid of Him?" Abruptly she sat down.

Nathan Bangs, for all his youth, was a master of psychology. He knew when he had his climax. Never would he have his people in a mood more susceptible to persuasion. He had one final art at his disposal.

"You who have experienced the power of God unto salvation, think of your unsaved friends and neighbors. Perhaps the one next you is in deep perplexity. Will you not in these last moments earnestly, lovingly commend to your friend the Saviour who has

saved you? Let there be no disorder! Move quietly! Speak quietly! But, oh! Be very earnest! It may be your last chance to help a sinner to his Saviour!"

On all sides men and women responded to this suggestion. Hubert glanced swiftly at the girl kneeling beside him. She caught the glance.

"Don't fear!" she said with the same little wistful smile playing upon her firm lips. "I'm not going to tackle you. Oh, look!"

Hubert followed the direction of her eyes. Old Waggles was obviously making for the seat vacant beside Billy Badger.

As she spoke Hope rose hastily, slipped over to the vacant seat, anticipating Mr. Waggley by the fraction of a second. Quietly she sat beside Billy, saying no word, but on her face a look of rapt emotion. After some time had elapsed Hubert received a shock. Billy rose up and straightened his shoulders. He was sick of it. He was going to leave. But no.

There was Billy Badger, the rollicking good fellow, the leader of a gang of young fellows devoted to sporting, hunting, dancing, a hard fighter if need be, a hard drinker too on occasion. With something less than his accustomed swagger, and yet with head high and shoulders squared, he walked quietly up to the penitent bench, indifferent to the criticism or ridicule of his companions. But there was no ridicule to-night. As Billy reached the enclosed space Nathan Bangs, with quick understanding, stepped forward to meet him, a radiant smile on his beautiful face.

"I bid you welcome, sir. You are doing the right thing, a fine, brave thing."

But Billy shook his head, sank to his knees, put his face in his hands. Beside him knelt Nathan Bangs with his arm about his shoulders.

There was no loud shouting, but deep and fervent were the ascriptions of thanksgiving and praise heard on all sides.

Hope came swiftly to Hubert's side.

"I didn't ask him to go. I didn't. I didn't," she said hurriedly. "He wanted to go himself. He would go."

"Yes! yes! I believe you, Hope. It was an awfully plucky thing to do, and Billy means it," said Hubert, more shaken than he cared to show.

By this time the penitent bench was crowded with penitents, men and women, young and old. After some time Nathan Bangs rose from his place at Billy's side, leaped upon the platform, and stood with uplifted hand.

"Brethren," he announced in a clear, compelling voice, "this young man has something to say to you. Come, Brother."

A hush fell upon the excited throng as Billy Badger placed his hand upon the railing and vaulted upon the platform. For a moment or two Billy stood silently gazing upon the people.

"I don't know how to begin," said Billy, "but something wonderful has come to me. How it come I don't know, but something big has got hold of me. I don't know what."

"It is Jesus, Brother," said Nathan Bangs in his clear, soft voice.

"Yes!" said Billy in ringing tones. "I do know! It is Jesus! I'm agoin' to stick to Him and He's agoin' to stick to me. And I thought it wouldn't be the square thing if I didn't tell you boys. That's all, I guess."

"That's enough! Praise the Lord!" cried Nathan Bangs. "Let us pray."

In beautifully simple speech the young minister began to pour out his heart in an ascription of wonder, thanksgiving, and glad triumph. Then in a brief but deeply moving prayer he committed the young recruit to the love and keeping of his Lord and closed the meeting with the benediction.

Through the crowding people that were gathered about the penitent bench offering their congratulations, encouragement to the new converts, the tall form of old Hector MacCrimmon could be seen pushing forward to where Billy Badger was standing.

"Will you allow me to offer you my felicitations, young man!" boomed the deep voice of the Highlander as he grasped Billy's hand. "It is a noble thing and a wise thing that you have done this night. I would to God that I had had the courage to do the like when I was your age. I should have been saved much shame, much loss, and many a heartache, I can assure you. May Almighty God have you in His keeping."

For a few moments the two stood with hands clasped. Then,

without further speech MacCrimmon turned away and disappeared into the dark woods at the side.

"Well, I'll be blowed! Billy Badger and Hector MacCrimmon —that beats me," said Hubert.

On Hope's face was a look of quiet ecstasy which forbade criticism and made love-making impossible.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DUEL

THE whole country was boiling with political passion. All classes of the people from Lieutenant-Governor Francis Gore down were caught in the surging eddies of partisan fury.

The case of the King vs. McBride had been carried on for a whole week in the stone court house at Niagara. The little town was thronged with people coming from many miles distant. The sheriff and constables were hard put to it to preserve order. After the daily adjournment the judge and jury, the counsel and officials of the court were delivered under guard to their respective quarters by a solid phalanx of constables through a raging, cheering, execrating mob.

Never in all his stormy political career had Mr. William Weekes, counsel for the defense, received such a tumultuous ovation from his admiring supporters as on the evening of the last day of the trial.

In his two hours' summing-up speech he had not scrupled to denounce the vindictive and shameless attempt of the government to cover up the iniquitous administration of its Land Department by its prosecution of a soldier of the King who had shed his blood on many a stricken field in defense of his country for a trivial breach of the law provoked by the insulting attitude of a supercilious government understrapper.

The government supporters on the other hand acclaimed Mr. William Dickson, the prosecuting counsel, as a master of calm and reasoned eloquence. He had won his case upon points of law. The accused soldier had been undoubtedly guilty of a grave offense. The evidence had been brought out with convincing clarity. As far as the law was concerned, Mr. Dickson had won hands down. But what could one expect with a judge like Thorpe on the bench?

In Hinds's Hotel Mr. Weekes, in the course of his libations over the bar, declared he had never been so grossly insulted in all his life as by the prosecuting counsel during this trial. Indeed, he should have called that scoundrel Dickson out right there and then. Would have, too, but for his respect for the Court.

"Well," laughed Judge Thorpe, "the court is adjourned now."

"Yes, begad," stormed Weekes, "and for a tuppenny ha'penny I'd call the beggar out yet, so I would. He impugned my honor, begad! He practically charged me with falsehood, he did!"

By a fatal mischance, at that very moment Dickson passed by the hotel window.

"There he is now!" shouted a voice.

"Where is the scoundrel?" cried Weekes. "Let me speak to him."

"No! Mr. Weekes, let him go!" said Judge Thorpe. "He's a cool hand."

"Not I, begad! I'll have his apology or his blood."

By another unhappy chance one of the company tapping on the window had succeeded in arresting Mr. Dickson's progress.

Weekes, flinging off the detaining hands of his friends, burst forth from the door.

"Mr. Dickson, sir! You are a scoundrel! You have insulted me, sir! I demand an apology forthwith!"

Mr. Dickson surveyed him coolly.

"Go away! You're drunk, Weekes. Go to bed. That's the only safe place for you."

"You insult me again, sir! I demand satisfaction."

"Go home, Weekes! I refuse to talk to you."

"Refuse to talk to me? You shall answer to me, sir. You shall hear from me."

"I call you to witness, gentlemen, that I have provoked no quarrel. I refuse to notice the challenge of a man who does not know what he is doing."

"Ha! Coward!" shouted Weekes, striving to shake himself free from his friends' grasp. "Coward! You shall not escape me, sir! You shall hear from me! And you shall give me the satisfaction which a gentleman cannot, dare not, refuse. Else you shall force me to horsewhip you for the cowardly cur that you are."

"Gentlemen! Once more I call you to witness the condition in which this gentleman is when he demands from me satisfaction."

So saying, he bowed to the company and passed on.

"No, Mr. Weekes," said Colonel Brookes, who had been in Mr. Dickson's company and who remained behind with the avowed purpose of preventing a meeting, "this must not go on. This is sheer nonsense! You must at least wait till morning. You must wait till you are in cooler blood, in more complete mastery of yourself. Listen to me, I beseech you. We do not see eye to eye politically, but I trust you recognize me as an old friend."

"I thank you, Colonel, for your good intentions. I appreciate your courteous kindness, sir. But this must go through. Do not imagine I am acting hastily. I have been deliberately and grossly insulted many times during this trial. I am entirely aware of the responsibility of my action."

"Major Moore, sir, would you do me the honor?" said Weekes, addressing an ex-officer standing near.

"At your service, Mr. Weekes. But I agree with Colonel Brookes that it would be better——"

"That will do, sir. Do I understand that you decline to act for me?"

"Not at all, sir, if you insist."

"I insist, sir."

It was in vain that friends of Mr. Weekes sought to prevent, or at least to delay, the meeting. In the early gray of the following morning two boats were observed to push through the mist hanging over the river and make for the American shore. A little later two Indians were seen to slip a canoe quietly into the river above the King's Wharf and paddle swiftly and silently toward the American fort.

The same morning at early noon a jolly picnic party laden with baskets and saddle bags stuffed with eatables and drinkables rode down from the Radcliffe lane toward the Shore Road and, pitching camp on an elm-shaded sward which sloped softly to the white sands of the lake shore, gave themselves up to the delights of the hour. Two young men, Edward Brookes and Harry Marcle, Arabella Talbot, Hope Radcliffe and the two Radcliffe

children, Serena and Chick, with Charlotte Brookes in special attendance, made up the party.

"What shall we do? What shall we play?" said Chick, skipping about on his crutch.

"Oh, Chick, you are so terribly energetic! First let us just rest on this lovely grass," said Hope, throwing herself down upon a bank of moss under a great elm.

"Suits me to a T," said Harry Marcle, disposing himself upon the grass beside her.

"Oh, Hope! Let's have games!" insisted Chick, indefatigable for all his crutch.

"Let's wait till the others come, eh, Chick?" suggested Edward Brookes. "Eustace and Hubert and Dorothea will be along soon. What do you say? Come along here. I'll take you on in a game of knife."

"All right, that's fine." Knife was one of Chick's specialties.

"No, Chicky, come on down to the shore and make a fort with a moat round it." Charlotte had the word. With a shout Chick was away toward the lake, followed by Serena and Charlotte, leaving the others to their repose.

"It will be a castle," announced Chick. "A regular castle with a moat and drawbridge and everything."

Chick was engineer in chief, the others his slave gang. First the castle was outlined upon a smooth, firm bit of sand. Next the walls were carried down into the solid sand bed below water level, but still remote from the shore line. Upon the solid foundations the superstructure of woven spruce boughs with turrets, spires, gables was erected. Around the castle a moat was dug with a drawbridge of tough elm bark. Lastly a trench was cut to the water's edge. The critical moment for the letting in of the water had arrived. The whole party was summoned to witness the final engineering triumph when the clatter of hoofs announced the arrival of the Honorable Eustace and Dorothea.

"Hello, Eustace!" shouted Chick. "You're just in time. We'll wait for you." Chick's special circle of "greatest friends" had been enlarged to include the Honorable Eustace.

With a wave of the hand Eustace saluted the youthful engineer. "In a moment, Chick," he said.

"Where's Hubert?" asked Arabella. "Isn't he coming?"

"Not here yet, eh?" inquired Eustace. "Now, where the deuce can he be? He should have been here. But I say." Eustace lowered his voice. "There is really bad news, you know." He drew the seniors to one side. "Weekes has been shot."

"Shot? Weekes? Who shot him?"

"Shot! Duel with that lawyer chap Dickson, you know."

"Not killed?" said Edward.

"Dropped in his tracks. Never moved. Tremendous row down there. Some wild talk going. Foul play and that sort of thing. Nothing in it, I think. But talk going all the same. Deuced unpleasant. Hubert not come, eh?" There was a note of anxiety in his voice.

"Hubert? No. Didn't you see him? He was to come with you," said Hope.

"Couldn't find him anywhere. Jolly big crowd milling round. A lot of noise. Weekes's friends wild. Couldn't find anyone who could or would talk sense. Hubert nowhere to be seen."

"Did you see my father?" asked Edward quietly.

"Yes, the colonel was doing some useful talking. Quieting the mob and that sort of thing. Steady old Roman, the colonel. Oh! I say! That young devil René got rather mixed up in the row."

"René? How could that child have anything to do with it?"

"That child? By Jove! Child? Eh, what? Young devil! Slipped over the river with an Indian chum of his."

"Black Hawk?" said Edward.

"Yes, another devil. Pushed over in a canoe and before anyone knew anything, was right in with the firing party. Gad! Major Moore gave me the details! By Jove! I'd give a year of life to have seen the thing. The boy was in a cold rage. Coolly proposed to take Weekes's place. Claimed Weekes was his uncle's friend. Some service about a farm and therefore his friend. Weekes was in no condition to fight. Couldn't hit a house. Rather think he was right there, eh what? Speech making every day for a week and drinking till all hours every night. Rotten shape for shooting. Moore was for brushing the boy aside. Got his arm jolly well twisted out of joint. I know what Indian tricks that young devil

has. Couple of johnnies advanced in force upon the youth. *Bang! Bang! Poof!* One chappie's hat flew in the air, the other's pistol hand smashed.

"Weekes himself settled the matter. Thanked the boy! Showed him nothing could be done. Must fight. Honor involved. No one must interfere. Dickson, I believe, offered to quit. Behaved rather well on the whole. Offered to wait a week. Weekes would listen to nothing. Opinion seems to be it was an accident on Dickson's part. No idea of shooting to kill. But Weekes was dancing about all over the place. Couldn't stand still."

"And René?" It was Charlotte who, unobserved, had pushed into the circle.

"My God, child! You shouldn't have been listening," said Eustace, aghast.

"I heard you, Eustace. Where is René?" The girl's face was like carved ivory, her black eyes agleam with an inner light, her voice quiet and steady.

"René, my dear Charlotte?" replied Eustace gravely, as if addressing a woman. "René has gone home to his uncle, I believe."

Charlotte's eyes held his for a few moments. "Yes," she said quietly. "Are you telling me the truth, Eustace? Oh, Hope! He is not! Let us go home!" She turned to the other girl with a quick shudder.

"Yes, Charlotte, we will go home. We must go home at once."

Leaving the castle unfinished and its moat without water, the picnic party, much disturbed in mind, set off for their homes. Before they had arrived at the Radcliffes' lane they saw coming toward them at a gallop another rider.

"Hubert! It is Hubert!" ejaculated Hope.

"No, Hope. That's Gyp galloping. She's smaller than Prince."

"You're right, Charlotte," said her brother. "It's René." A very few minutes brought René to them. Gyp was in a foaming lather. The boy threw a wild-eyed glance over the party.

"Hubert! Where's Hubert?" he said, addressing himself to Eustace. "Didn't you get him?" His face was pale, drawn, and ten years older than at the raising. It was the face no longer of a boy but of a man.

"Have you heard anything, René?" said Eustace.

"Yes, Dickson is gone to York. Hubert, I guess, is after him."

He swung his colt on her hind legs.

"Hold on, René!" cried Edward. The boy paid no heed.

"René! Wait!" Charlotte's cry halted him. He faced his mare about and stood looking at the girl.

"René, are you going to kill Dickson?" asked Charlotte.

"No! No! What nonsense!" The boy laughed wildly. "There's been enough shooting. I want to prevent any more. Hubert is not much of a shot."

"Hubert? Good Lord, René! What do you mean?" Edward's voice was anxious. "What has Hubert to do with this?"

"Hubert would like to kill Dickson," said René quietly. "I'm not going to let him try. They will both have to shoot me first."

"Where are you going now, René?" said Charlotte in her strangely quiet voice.

"York."

"Oh, René, what can you do? You won't——"

There was a glitter in the boy's eye. "Don't worry. No one will kill me, Charlotte. They can't."

His eyes rested quietly on the girl. "Don't you worry," he said with a smile. "They can't kill me, and I won't kill them. Good-bye."

"Hold up, young fellow," said Eustace. "I am due at York to-morrow. Got an important meeting. Can't you wait till to-morrow?"

"To-morrow? No!" said the boy. "I've waited too long."

He touched his colt with his heel and was gone.

"By Jove! He carries my money!" said Eustace. "They can't kill him. But——"

"Where are you going?" said Edward.

"York, eh what? As a matter of fact, I have been ordered to meet the general—Brock, you know. Besides, I know the run of that hamlet. I fancy I may be of some service to our young friend. Eh, what? No occasion for alarm."

Edward set his horse in motion after him. "Guess I'll go along too."

"Edward!" said Hope. "Your mother will need you."

"By Jove! She's right. Besides, there's no call for any bally

cavalry brigade," said Eustace with a touch of derision in his voice.

"All right," replied Edward. "You keep me posted, Eustace."

"Right you are, old chap. Women and children, you know—eh what?" And with a gay flourish he was gone.

CHAPTER XIV

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

THE night was drawing in when René reached the capital. For all his eight hours in the saddle he was still quite fresh, but his mare was leg weary, though with sufficient speed to step daintily about the mud holes in the street and shy briskly at the strange sights and sounds in this strange town. Her rider shared her nervous apprehensions. York, though no larger than his own Niagara, had more of the airs of a city. There were finer and bigger buildings. The streets were noisier, the waterfront more imposing. Its citizens carried an air of cosmopolitan importance quite impressive to the country boy. He had not a single friend or acquaintance in town. His mind held but one idea, to find Hubert Brookes and prevent his meeting with Dickson. Hubert would be at the Royal Hotel, the headquarters of the Government party. There too he might find Judge Thorpe, who had ridden into town the previous night. Hubert would be guided by Judge Thorpe's advice.

About the door of the Royal Hotel a very considerable company of gentlemen were engaged in excited conversation. From some words he caught René knew the theme of their discussion was the duel. Slipping from his saddle René approached a man, evidently the hostler, with a bucket in his hand.

"I want to stable my mare here for the night," he said.

"All right, my hearty. Let me have her. Come along here, sir," he said in a loud voice, snatching roughly at the bridle rein. But Gyp, unused to rough handling, flew back from his clutch, dragging him with her.

"Whoa! Gol dern yer hide! What's the matter with you?"

"She's only a colt," explained René.

"I'll colt her," said the hostler with an oath, and jerking at the

rein he kicked the colt savagely in the stomach. The next instant he found himself blinking up at René from the ground.

With a wicked oath the hostler scrambled to his feet.

"Say! Who are you hittin'?" he said, walking toward René, who appeared as much surprised as he at what had happened.

"Very pretty, very pretty indeed. Serves you right, Bill," said a young gentleman standing near. The men about the door came crowding near.

"The man that kicks my horse kicks me," said René.

"Say, I'll just kill you," said Bill, circling slowly about the boy.

"You touch my colt again and you'll be sorry you ever laid eyes on her," replied René, moving so swiftly upon him that Bill fairly turned and fled through the stable door, followed by the jeering laughter of the onlookers.

"Very useful little punch," said the young gentleman. René picked up the bucket and, drawing water from the pump, proceeded to sluice down his mare's legs.

"Nice little colt. Looks tired, eh?"

"She's come a long way to-day," said René.

"How far, may I ask?"

"From Niagara. Since noon."

"By Jove! From Niagara? I say, young feller, would you care to part——"

"No!" said René shortly. "I raised her."

"Oh, sorry! No offence, I hope."

"That's all right. That hostler made me mad," said René, ashamed at his brusqueness.

"Got what will do him good. I say, my name is Vincent Howard. Rather fond of horses myself," said the young gentleman, offering his hand.

"My name is René LaFlamme. My hand's wet," said René.

"Never mind the wet. I like a man that likes his horse. Hope to know you better," said the young gentleman, shaking hands.

After putting up and caring for his horse René entered the bar and found there an excited group of men noisily discussing the duel. Among them was young Vincent Howard, announcing loudly to two friends drinking with him his opinion that Weekes had got only his deserts. His two friends of military appearance,

but down at the heel, were backing his opinion, keeping his glass full as they talked. René was familiar with their type. He had often met their kind about the docks and hotels of Niagara.

As he was making inquiry at the bar for a room, young Howard's eyes fell upon him.

"Ah! By Jove!" cried Howard. "Here's a young fellow can tell us all about it. He's just from Niagara. Gentlemen, allow me to present my friend Mr. René LaFlamme, a man that owns a good horse and knows how to care for it—and for himself, too. One of the right sort."

Annoyed at Howard's noisy introduction, René bowed to his friends and continued his inquiry as to a room.

"From Niagara!" said one of Howard's military friends, drawing near to René. "Tell us about it, will you?"

"I prefer not to speak of it," said René.

"Oh, come on! Don't be shy! Let us hear the news."

René glanced at his bloated face and turned away to the clerk.

"May I have a room, please?" he asked.

"Say, young fellow," said the military man, laying a hand on René's shoulder, "where's your manners?"

René moved away from his hand.

"Look here, young fellow, if you know anything about the duel, why can't you tell us? Do you know anything about it?"

"I do, sir, but I prefer not to speak of it!" Once more René turned away from the man.

A slight laugh rippled over the company.

"Shut up, Bailey. Leave him alone. Don't be a brute," said young Howard.

"He's insulted me, by gad," said Bailey, once more laying a gripping hand on René's shoulder. Quietly René reached up a hand, caught him by his wrist, and with a swift turn of his body brought his hand sharply down, thus twisting the man's arm behind his body and causing him excruciating pain. With a howl Bailey stood helpless, squirming.

"Let go!" he yelled with an oath.

"Serve you right, Bailey," said Howard in a disgusted tone. "You will be a beast."

On all sides came exclamations of approval.

A tall, elderly gentleman with military bearing came forward.

"Will you please present me, Howard?" he said.

"Certainly. Colonel Bentley, late Forty-ninth, my friend Mr. René LaFlamme."

"Delighted to make your acquaintance," said the colonel, offering his hand. "And may I ask without offence if the rumor is true that Mr. Weekes has been wounded in a duel at Niagara? He is a friend of mine. I am anxious to know."

"Certainly, sir. He was killed this morning early by Mr. William Dickson."

"Killed! May I ask who challenged? Don't answer if you prefer not to speak. I am very anxious."

"Mr. Weekes challenged, sir."

"How do you know?" asked a voice.

"I was there."

"Good Lord!" The company gathered close about him.

"Was it a fair fight?" inquired another voice.

René looked at the speaker in silence.

"Gentlemen, we must respect this young man's reticence," said Colonel Bentley. "Will you do me the distinguished honor of dining with me, sir?"

"With pleasure, sir," said René. "I must see about a room first."

"Thank you, sir. Will you see that a room is assigned Mr. La Flamme at once," said the colonel to the clerk. "I shall wait you, sir, here. You too, Howard, eh?"

"Sorry, sir, awfully sorry—fact is I am engaged," said Howard, glancing at Bailey.

"Ah! Very sorry indeed," said the colonel, bowing low. "I am in town overnight and—awfully sorry, sir." Again the colonel bowed low.

The dinner proved a delightful experience to René. He learned that neither Judge Thorpe nor Hubert had arrived in town and that Mr. Dickson was registered at the hotel but had not come in to dinner. The colonel proved to be a most interesting conversationalist. He was an old friend of the commander-in-chief—had served with him in Europe, and was in constant consultation with him.

Toward the close of the dinner René was conscious of a compelling desire to confide in this widely experienced man of the world. At length he exclaimed:

"Colonel Bentley, I wonder if I might ask your advice. I am really very much at a loss what to do, and I must act quickly."

"My boy, if I can assist you, depend upon me."

"I shall be only too glad to do so."

"It is about this duel," said René.

"Ah! You are sure you wish to consult me?"

"Yes indeed, sir." And for nearly an hour René poured forth his tale. He told of the Indian wrongs, of the wrongs of the ex-soldiers. He gave a graphic account of the trial of McBride at Niagara. "Perhaps Weekes went too far in the courtroom. Perhaps Judge Thorpe allowed him to go too far. I don't know about these things. The soldier was to blame, I guess, but the clerk was to blame too, and the soldier had his wrongs, just like my uncle. And the fight—I don't say it was Dickson's fault. He tried to get out of it. Did his best—but—well, one thing is sure: Weekes wasn't fit to fight. All nervous with drinking and the trial. Could hardly stand steady."

"Most deplorable thing! And at this time! It will make bad blood," said Colonel Bentley. "The general will be greatly distressed about this."

"Let me see," continued the colonel. "I happen to know that the general has a very important meeting late to-night at the Queen's Hotel. It will not be before midnight. Now, I shall leave word at the desk to report to me if either Judge Thorpe, Dickson, or young Brookes, whom I know slightly, comes in. I suggest that you go to the Queen's. It is quite possible that Dickson may be at that meeting, in which case you may get speech with him. Do not be distressed. I undertake to see that nothing untoward takes place."

René thanked him heartily and passed into the large and comfortable barroom of the Royal Hotel, which he found to be filled with men representative of all ranks and classes of society in the Capital. Hunters in buckskins, officers in uniform, young bloods in gaily colored evening dress, soberly garbed business folk and professional men, they were all there.

The talk turned chiefly on the duel, the rights and wrongs of it, its probable effects upon the political situation. The duel had come to be under the ban of the Law and the Church but as yet was not condemned by unanimous public opinion. The military men were loud in defence of the duel as the only recourse open to a gentleman whose honor had been impugned.

Many eyes were turned in René's direction as he entered the bar. He resolved to escape as soon as possible.

At this point Howard, accompanied by Bailey and his friends, entered the bar. After calling for drinks they passed upstairs. René's suspicions were aroused. He determined to keep an eye upon Mr. Bailey. He was quite familiar with the methods of gentlemen of his quality in the barrooms and gambling dens of Niagara and Queenstown. Allowing a few minutes to elapse, René passed upstairs, going toward his own room.

As he reached the first landing he heard voices, thick and noisily boisterous, issuing from a sitting room, the door of which was ajar. One of these voices he recognized as that of Vincent Howard. Pushing the door wide open, he stood looking in upon the group of men gathered about a table. Howard, Bailey, and two friends were deep in a game. Little piles of gold and notes adorned the table.

"Oh, hello, my young bucko!" cried Howard, who was finding difficulty in holding his cards.

"Private room, sir!" said Bailey sourly.

"Private room be eternally and everlastingly dashed! Welcome, mister—mister—the name I regret shay slipsh my mind, but come right in and take a hand. All good fellowsh together. Draw up, draw up. Go on, Bailey, let joy be uncon—unconfirmed."

René sat down, refusing to play but expressing a desire to watch the game.

"Mos' certainly, sure thing! Any friend mine welcomes as flowers of May in shpringtime—the merry, merry shpringtime! All righ'."

"Your play, Howard."

"My play? My play! Shee your dodge ol' horse, but can' come

over me. Can' come over Vinc Howard! There, by jolly, cover that!" He slammed a card noisily on the table.

Bailey hesitated, glanced at his partner, played a low card, and lost the trick. Howard shouted his joy and went into ecstatic jubilations over his skill in the game. But when the hand was finished the stakes were in Bailey's hand.

Howard's hands went into his pockets.

"Cleared out, begad!"

"That's all right, Vinc," said Bailey. "I'll lend you a pony."

"Never borrow from a 'ponent. 'Gainst my princ'ples. Dead broke. But hol' on! Hol' yer horse, my bucko! Borrow from government, all righ'." He drew from his inside waistcoat pocket a large roll of notes. "Borrow a fiver. Perfectly all righ'." He stripped a five-pound note from the roll, put the remainder back in his pocket. "Now then, wheresh my glash? Must brash up—brash up—clean up the house—clean up the whole dashed house." He filled up his glass with raw whisky and drank it off.

"Sure you don't want to sit in with us? Perhaps you don't play," said Bailey with a suspicion of a sneer.

"Say! What kind of a game are you playing?" asked René brightly.

"Yankee euchre. Have you played it?"

"I've watched 'em play," said René. He did not think it necessary to tell him that he had played the game for a whole day at a time with Black Hawk and the other Indians, who were all notorious gamblers, and that no one in the tribe was more dreaded by the Indians than he. He had a "better face," a "quicker guess," than any Indian. At least, such was his reputation with them. Often he had stripped Black Hawk bare of knife, ax, pony, only to return his gain in the form of gifts.

"My, it's warm!" He threw off his coat and sat in his homespun shirt, revealing his new-fashioned double-barreled English pistol, a beautiful little weapon, in his belt. He hitched round his pistol in front of him, pulled it out of its holster, and examined it closely. "All right," he said. "Ever use one of these things?" he asked Bailey.

"I've seen 'em. Never used 'em. I prefer the single-barrel pistol," replied Bailey.

"This is good for a second shot, like this." His hand flashed up, two shots rang out, two candles in their sconces on the wall were snuffed out.

"My God! Young fellow, look out!"

"That's all right," said René, reloading his empty barrels.

A man rushed upstairs and dashed into the room.

"Anyone hurt?" he gasped. "What——?"

"Oh, nothing at all. My pistol went off," said René. "Let's get into the game."

"All right, be careful. That's all I can say," replied the man, going downstairs again.

"Lesh have 'nother drink," said Howard. "Nervish! Rather dishturbed by that episode. Have one Mr. —— Yesh, got it—LaFlamme. Thesh wha' he's like—LaFlamme. Thash him—LaFlamme. Ha, ha, ha! Good joke! Reg'lar flaming fire, what?"

"I'm out o' this," said Howard's partner.

"Have a drink," said Bailey, passing a glass and bottle to René.

"Never drink too much," replied René, helping himself. "Apt to get shooting at people if I do."

"Good Lord!" said Bailey's friend under his breath.

"Come on! Come on!" said René, tapping the table smartly. "Let's get to the game. Howard, you and I will take on these gentlemen. I want to learn the game. Let's make it penny points."

"Penny points! Oh! I say!" remonstrated Bailey, but quite politely. René's pistol practice had vastly improved his manners.

"Make it shillings, then," said René, "and play till we're cleaned out. When I'm cleaned out I stop."

The chief interest in Yankee euchre is that it is a purely betting game. You bet on your hand or your partner's or both. The player with the best "face" usually wins.

"Come along! Get to it!" René's hand came down on the table with a noisy slam. Bailey's friend, who gave his name as Smith, gave a nervous start. Any of René's friends would have been amazed at his manners. He was noisy, boisterous, boastful. He was always trifling with his pistol, putting it in his holster and pulling it out again. His partner was too fully primed to be much disturbed, but the other two were made distinctly nervous by René's careless handling of the weapon.

"Put that blasted thing away," Bailey begged at length.

"Perfectly safe!" said René. "I've played with pistols since I was a baby. Come on! Play up!"

Whether it was their nervousness or their rage at being disturbed at what promised to be a profitable game, Bailey and his friend began to lose from the very start. They bet timidly and lost, they bet recklessly and lost. They overplayed and they underplayed their hands. At the end of an hour they wished to quit. René, however, rapping noisily with his pistol on the table, insisted upon playing till one side or the other was cleaned out. That was the rule of the game.

"Turn out your pockets!" he shouted. "Let's see the bottom of them."

"Not much there," said Bailey with an angry snarl, pulling out some silver and some papers.

"What's in those papers?" said René, picking up one. "Aha! We'll play for those I. O. U.'s. Put 'em up! Put 'em all up!" Again the butt of the pistol made the glasses jingle. At length Bailey and his chum were completely stripped.

"All right! Now to bed, Edward!" shouted René. "You going to bed, Bailey?"

"I'd like to shoot 'em all out," continued René in an excited voice. "Say, I could shoot the pipe out of your mouth and never touch you. Often done with the Indians. Little joke, of course. Want to see me do it?"

"For God's sake, put up that pistol. Let's get downstairs, Smith. This man is mad. Coming, Howard?"

"No!" shouted René, flourishing his pistol. "He's not. Let's try a shot at your pipe! No danger, not the least."

Bailey snatched the pipe from his mouth and hurried downstairs, followed by Smith.

"Well, good-night!" cried René after them.

Bing! Bing! went the pistol twice. Two lights on the stairs went out. The last half-dozen steps were taken by Smith in two leaps.

"My God! Let me out of this," he yelled. "That young devil is mad, crazy mad. He'll kill any six of you that dares to go up there."

"Here, you below there! You bar man! Come up, will you please? Come, there's no danger since those sharks have gone."

The bartender came up cautiously.

"Call up another citizen, a respectable chap, please."

"Mr. Fraser, will you please come up here?"

"Come in here, gentlemen," said René very politely. "Will you please count this money? This fiver goes with your roll, Howard. Let me have it. Did you borrow any more from this roll? How much had you here?"

"Two hundred fifty pounds."

"Count that!" said René. The amount was found to be correct.

"Now count the rest. Never mind these," he said, taking the I. O. U.'s and tearing them into small pieces.

"Fifty-seven pounds, ten shillings, and sixpence."

"Now, will you please give me a receipt for these whole amounts and hand the lot to Mr. Howard to-morrow morning and take his receipt?"

The arrangement was speedily completed.

"Those two sharks should not be allowed to go about loose. We've got them down on the river front too, but we watch them better than you do. Good-night! Come along, Howard."

Meekly the men went downstairs, and meekly Howard followed René to his room, where he was put safely to bed with his door locked on the outside.

CHAPTER XV

GENERAL BROCK

As René was proceeding to the Queen's Hotel he was excited by the possibility of seeing the commander-in-chief. Of all living men Brock was his supreme hero. He had read everything that he could find out about his campaign under Abercrombie in Holland and under the great Nelson at Copenhagen. He remembered the whole colony had been thrilled with the story of his dealing with the deserters from his own old regiment, the famous Forty-ninth, at the time under the command of the martinet General Sheaffe at Fort George. How, when the report of the mutiny reached him at York, he immediately in an open boat crossed the lake, came upon the deserters at Fort Niagara, promptly arrested them, sent them down to headquarters. He remembered how his own tears had flowed as his uncle, with breaking voice, read aloud the general's speech to the regiment upon the execution of the death sentence. He never forgot the words. "Soldiers," the general had said, while the tears flowed down his cheeks, "since I have had the honor to wear the British uniform never have I felt grief like this." The tears of his men answered him. Never again was there a deserter from the Forty-ninth.

There was a chance that he might catch a glimpse of his hero. He approached a porter at the Queen's Hotel and asked if the general had yet arrived and was informed that he would not come for half an hour.

"Tell me, will he pass in through this room?"

"Through the bar, is it? Not much likely. No, he'll be goin' in by the private entrance, so he will."

"Say! Could I get a look at him? I rode in from Niagara today. I'd like awfully to see him."

"Come along then wit' me," said the waiter, leading the way

into a cloakroom off the main room set apart for the meeting. "Sit ye here and say nawthin'."

René did as he was bidden and waited, his eyes fixed upon the entrance. Hardly had he taken his place when the door opened and an aide entered followed by a handsome man more than six feet tall, young, straight, strongly built, with a noble face. It was General Brock. The aide took the general's outer coat and brought it to the cloakroom attendant. The general was instinct with vital force. His eye swept the room, seeming to take in every object within view. His glance touched lightly the attendant, then rested for one piercing instant upon René, who was standing and staring with all his eyes.

"Good-evening," said the general. As he glanced at René's buckskins he smiled, and the smile seemed to irradiate the dim cloakroom. "You are a trapper?"

"No, sir," said René, feeling very small and embarrassed. "That is, I do trap with the Indians."

"Ah, with the Indians? What Indians?"

"The Mohawks, sir, the Grand River Indians. Brant's Indians and others as well," said René, much flustered.

"But you are not a trapper, eh?" still with his fascinating smile.

"Hardly, sir. My uncle is a farmer."

"And your father?" inquired the general, coming nearer.

"He is dead, sir. He was a French officer."

"Ah! French from Quebec?"

"No, sir, from Old France. He went back from Quebec after the conquest. He fought against us in the Revolutionary War and came here with my mother in '96 and died soon after. She was a loyalist, a Highlander."

"And you? What are you? This is extremely interesting," the general added to his aide.

"Yes, sir, extremely," replied the aide, who was bored and wanted to get on into the meeting waiting them.

"I'm a Canadian, sir. My uncle was regimental sergeant major in the Forty-second, sir." René unconsciously squared his shoulders a little.

"Aha! Now we are at something, Montague. Just what I want, a veteran! Splendid, the very thing. Your name, boy?"

"René LaFlamme."

"Your uncle's?"

"Sergeant Major Ross, sir."

"Take that down, Montague. One of those veterans we are anxious to mobilize. We may need him some day. And we may need you too, boy, eh? Good-night. René LaFlamme? Aha! LaFlamme. I won't forget you." He waved his hand and passed through the door.

René stood looking at the closed door, every nerve in his body tingling. He was in a maze, his heart choking his throat. He sat down to think the thing over. He had seen his hero, had talked with him. He was more splendid than he had imagined. Some day he might serve under him. If war should come! René thrilled at the thought. So occupied was he with his thoughts and emotions that he hardly noticed the door open again. He gave little heed to a gentleman who came in, handed his coat to the attendant, till he was about to pass into the inner room. Then René saw it was Mr. Dickson. The same instant Dickson observed, recognized him, and hurried into the next room.

"I'll wait here," said René, settling himself in the chair.

"Will ye, now? Then ye may. They're all in that's comin', and I'm as dry as the inside of a bake-oven. If any straggler comes in, do you take his coat from him till I come back." René nodded, and the thirsty attendant vanished seeking alleviation of his arid condition in the neighboring bar. No sooner had the door closed upon him than a straggler appeared. A long military cloak enveloped his tall person. Throwing off the cloak he displayed the gorgeous uniform of the Guards.

"Here, fellow," he said, passing the cloak to René. "Put that in some safe place. Good Lord! What did I have in that last round? It can't be! What! René? By all the gods and little fishes! Now tell me, am I in the right roost? Is there a meeting of notables behind that door? Or——"

"The general is in there. General Brock and——"

"The general? I understood he had not arrived. Was coming to-morrow! Tell me, young fellow, man to man as a brother and friend, do I seem *compos?* Coherent? Intelligent?—no intelligible, that's it. The general! Good Lord! He doesn't stand for this

sort of thing, you know. A blunder, that last rounder to top off with! Scotch is no sort of amen to a dinner with a lot of brisk young colonials. But, René, how am I?" Eustace gazed anxiously into René's face.

"You're all right if you don't talk too much."

"Solomon, Daniel, Solon, and all the other johnnies! I shall confine myself strictly to monosyllabic answers."

"Eustace, Dickson is in there. Just gone in. No, listen. I'm not after him, but Hubert is in town. He is raging to meet him. He will insult him. He must be stopped. I must see Dickson. I think he will listen to me. Only a few minutes. Get him out here to me somehow, will you? Send him out, Eustace. I will wait till he comes."

"What about to-morrow morning?" cried Eustace. "It will perhaps be awkward to-night."

"No! No!" said René emphatically. "I must see him to-night. Hubert will be certain to meet with him, and you know how terrible that would be."

"Yes, possibly it would. Well, I shall do my best, but of course you can't break into a conference with the general. Wish I had known he had arrived. A man needs all the mind he has when in the general's presence. I have met him a few times. Don't wait here too long. If I can't get Dickson out to you, you should go."

"Get him out here, Eustace, or I shall wait all night," said René; and Eustace knew that he would make good his word.

René leaned his chair against the wall and set himself to wait. He had had a long and exciting day, from the early gray dawn when he had paddled across the Niagara in his canoe with Black Hawk. That seemed to him now ages ago. He was awakened from his sleep by Eustace's hand upon his shoulder. In a single instant he was on his feet and wide awake, as is the way with men of the woods.

"He wants you in there," said Eustace in hurried confusion. "What do you think of that? He wants to know about Indians. Now, be alive, he won't stand any nonsense. Facts! Facts! Facts! Do you want to put your head in a bucket, eh what?"

"I am awake enough," replied René. "But, I say, Eustace, what does he want me for?"

"My chief, Claus, you know, is in there," said Eustace, "and the general has him, as you chaps here say, tied up in hard knots. I was sorry for him. I thought of you and remembered that Edward Brookes and Miss Charlotte had told me about you and your Indian chums, so I took a shot at it, mainly to help out my chief, I confess. But, at any rate, you know the Indian chaps. Tell him all you can. Only don't try to—you know."

"Bluff him, you mean," said René.

"Exactly."

With shaking knees he went in to meet the general.

As René entered his eye swept the room in one swift glance, recognizing the general and Mr. Dickson, but no others. Some twenty-five men were present, men apparently from all ranks of life.

"Aha! Aha!" exclaimed the general. "LaFlamme! Come forward here, boy. They tell me you know Indians."

"Yes, sir, some Indians," replied René, keeping his eye steadfastly upon the general's face.

"How do you come to know them?"

"I have trapped with them, hunted with them, traded with them. I have lived with them."

Then followed a series of short, sharp, searching questions as to the numbers of the various tribes in the Western Peninsula, their manners, customs, and the like.

René answered promptly what he knew and as promptly indicated his ignorance when he did not know.

"And the American Indians?" queried the general. "Do you know them too?"

"Not many, sir. Some I do."

"How do you happen to know the American Indians?"

"They often visit the Mohawks, and once or twice I have gone across the Detroit River with Black Hawk, a young Mohawk chief, sir, to visit them."

"Are these Canadian Indians well disposed to our government?"

"They used to be, sir. They are discontented now."

"Ah! Why discontented?"

"They have been robbed by the government agents and——"

"Robbed? What do you mean by that?" The general's question came like the snap of a whip.

René went into a brief and categorical explanation.

"Can this thing be true?" exclaimed the general.

Here Colonel Claus interposed.

"The boy exaggerates greatly, sir. There may be some overcharging, but Indians are notorious for their reckless and foolish buying."

René remained silent, his eyes still on the general's face.

"What do you say to that?" inquired the general sternly.

"Ask the Indians, sir. Let me bring Black Hawk here. Or ask Colonel Brookes of Niagara."

"Colonel Brookes! I know him. Does Colonel Brookes know?"

Then René gave him an account of his own and Black Hawk's visit to the colonel. "And Colonel Brookes was indignant, sir. There is some sixty thousand pounds distributed annually among the Indians," continued René. "Much of it is given in trade."

"Colonel Claus," said the general, turning swiftly upon him. "Tell me if you know this to be true in the slightest degree."

Before that flaming eye Claus quailed and faltered.

"There are some irregularities, no doubt," replied Colonel Claus. "I am afraid—in fact, I may say I know—we have had to dismiss some agents for irregularities."

"Irregularities!" exclaimed the general. "My God! What madness at this time! At this critical time! When it is of the very utmost importance that our Indians should be wholly loyal. Colonel Claus, this comes under the purview of my department. I invite your earnest, your very earnest, attention in investigating and reporting to me the facts."

"Yes, sir," replied Colonel Claus. "You shall have my very best help."

"Thank you," said the general curtly.

At this point Mr. Dickson began moving quietly toward the door. René stepped quickly in front of him.

"I must speak with you, Mr. Dickson," he said in a low voice.

Dickson made to push past him. The boy remained immovably in his way. The keen eye of the general noted the incident.

"What is this?" he exclaimed. "LaFlamme! What is this?"

"I've got to speak with Mr. Dickson," replied René.

"May I ask why?" exclaimed the general. "Is it so important that we must interrupt this investigation?"

"Yes," replied René. "He has just killed a friend of my uncle's."

"What? What? Killed?"

Eustace stepped forward and gave a hurried account of the duel.

"Mr. Weekes!" exclaimed the general. "A member of Legislature! Killed this morning? My God! What madness is this at such a time? Boy, come here." The general's voice rang out sharply. "Mr. Dickson, a moment, please. Now, boy, what have you to do with this?"

"Mr. Weekes was my uncle's friend, sir," said René. "He saved his farm for him."

"What in heaven's name do you mean?"

René explained.

"Are you all mad in this country? At a time when we should all stand together as one man? But what do you want of Mr. Dickson, boy? You do not wish to fight him, I suppose."

"He would not fight me," replied René. "He knows that I could kill him."

"I don't fight boys," said Mr. Dickson. "General Brock, this is a bitter experience for me. I deeply regret the duel. I was forced to fight Mr. Weekes this morning. I did my very best to avoid it, as all present will tell you."

"That is true, sir," said René. "He did his best to get out of fighting because Mr. Weekes was not fit to fight. He could hardly stand. He should not have been allowed to fight."

"But what have you to do with this?" inquired the general sharply.

"There are other men who wish to fight Mr. Dickson. One of them is a friend of mine."

"And who is that?" inquired the general.

"Hubert Brookes, Colonel Brookes's eldest son. I want to stop him from fighting. He has come to this town to-night. He is looking for Mr. Dickson at this minute."

"Hubert Brookes?" exclaimed Mr. Dickson.

"Heavens above! What a country!" The general threw up his hands. "Gentlemen, this sort of thing must end. We must close our ranks. This is no time for private dissensions. All this is sheer disloyalty to our country. Mr. Dickson, the boy is right. You must at all costs avoid a meeting with young Brookes. I know his father."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Dickson. "Most certainly, sir. The last thing I want is to meet him or anyone else."

"I suggest to you an immediate visit to friends over the river. Cannot this be arranged?"

"Yes, sir, I believe so," replied Dickson.

"It must be arranged," said the general sternly. "And immediately. Within the half hour. We cannot—I will not have any more of this. You, Mr. Dickson, are in the militia of this country. As your commanding officer I order you to leave this town within the half hour and remain until this madness has passed from the community."

"General," said Mr. Dickson firmly, "I want you to understand that this duel was not of my seeking. I have already told you so. I refer you to all who were present at the time. I refer you to Colonel Brookes. This boy, who was present at the duel, will confirm what I say. I did all I could to avoid it."

"I accept your word, sir. But there must be no more of this. Good-night."

Mr. Dickson bowed, turned, and left the room.

"Colonel Claus, you know the Indians. Have you an agent whom I could trust? Whose discretion I could rely upon? Who is fully acquainted with the Indians, our own and those across the line? Can you find such a man whom I could send to make an investigation for me? He must be a man of intelligence and of unscrupulous honor."

Colonel Claus hesitated. "I shall have to think over that, sir," he replied.

At this point Eustace stepped forward. "May I suggest, sir, that this young man has a very full and intimate acquaintance with the Indians. He trades and traps with them, I understand. I have reason to believe that he is entirely trustworthy."

"You need not tell me that, sir," said the general. "I can read men and boys, but, after all, he is a mere boy. This is serious work that I have in mind. Still, a boy might escape notice more easily. Come here, LaFlamme."

René came forward and stood at attention.

"You know the Mohawks, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"And the Mississagas?"

"Not so well, sir."

"And you know some of the Indians across the river?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have traded with them?"

"No, sir."

"Hunted with them?"

"Yes, sir."

"How do they feel toward the Americans?"

"They hate them, sir."

"Ah! Ah! And why?"

"Because the Americans have broken their treaties and are stealing their land from them. At least, I have heard them say these things."

The general stood with his eyes fastened upon René's face for some moments. "LaFlamme," he said slowly, "would you like to do a bit of work for me?"

René's face flushed a deep red. "I would, sir," he said fervently.

"When are you ready to go?"

"Now, sir," replied René promptly.

"Now? To-night?"

"Yes, sir, to-night."

"But your people—your uncle?"

"I shall send him a message, sir." He glanced at Eustace, and Eustace nodded.

"Yes, sir, I can take a message for him," said Eustace.

"By my soul, gentlemen," said the general with great emphasis, "this is the kind of service we want in this country. We would not long be defenceless if we had more men like this young man here. And defenceless we are at this present moment. Let me

now recapitulate in brief what I have said to you this evening. First we must build boats for these lakes at Kingston, at York, at Niagara, at Amherstburg, at St. Joseph. A few boats at each of these points will make our lakes secure. With our lakes secure we can hold the country. Next we must enroll and drill a strong body of militia. This is imperative. Further, we must mobilize the ex-soldiers, the veterans who are distributed upon farms throughout this country. This we must proceed to do at once. Your uncle, boy, will be invaluable to us. When the summons comes for him I know he will be ready."

"Yes, sir," replied René in an assured voice. "He will."

"And, gentlemen," continued the general, "for God's sake and in God's name, let me entreat you to have done with these petty political conflicts. And now I shall reveal to you the very latest news from overseas, and it is of the gravest nature. The Emperor of the French has just issued from Berlin decrees intended to blockade Great Britain from all outside traffic, from traffic with every country in Europe and the United States as well. Can you imagine how very serious this is? This has not yet been made public in our country. It will be in a few days. I announce this news to you that you may see the vast importance of forgetting political and personal strife and standing solidly together for the defence of our country. One thing more, gentlemen. All that I have told you, all that has happened here to-night, I must beg you on your honor to preserve inviolate."

"Boy," he said, turning to René, "come to me to-morrow morning."

"Yes, sir," said René promptly. "At what hour?"

"Six o'clock," said the general.

"Yes, sir," replied the boy. His eyes filled with a flashing, eager light. He was ready for anything.

Together René and Eustace walked to the Royal Hotel.

"Jove! What a chap!" exclaimed Eustace. "Have seen him two or three times. My people know him. But he is bigger every time I see him. Boats and bateaux, militia and veterans. If he gets his way the johnnies across the line will have a time crackin' the Canadian nut, eh what?"

René walked along in a maze. Turning a street corner, they

came full upon a man walking swiftly, head down. It was Dickson, carrying a bag and heading for the dock.

"My word! Dickson! And making for the boat," muttered Eustace, catching René by the arm.

"Dickson?" René glanced at the man and let him go without a second look. Dickson had vanished from his scheme of things. He was moving in a new world of big things, a world in which these petty political quarrels and personal bickerings had no place. This General Brock had done for him.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TRADER

Mr. Robert Hamilton sat in his office reading a letter. The letter was heavily sealed, bore a crest, and was delivered by René's hand. The last paragraph arrested Mr. Hamilton's attention. He read it slowly a second time.

You may lose something by this. You probably will, but you will render me a great service and your country as well. As to your financial loss, I will recoup you. One thing more: The messenger is a mere boy, but a good deal of a man, too, if I know men. I understand he has served with you. He has won my confidence, but if he has not won yours, then we must find another trader.

"'You may lose money.'" Mr. Hamilton read the sentence aloud. "Not much doubt of that. 'I will recoup you.' I should truly love to make you do it. Well, well, we'll see to that. 'If he has not won yours, then we must find another.' Ye'll seek far, my man, ere ye do."

Mr. Hamilton had a habit of dropping into the Doric in his private communings or in easy and familiar conversation. "Well, I'll have a crack with the lad." He opened the door and called to a clerk, "Mr. Adam! Mr. Adam! Send that boy in."

René entered, anxious-eyed and watchful.

"Huh! Um-m-ah! Well, my lad, you're thinking of trading?"

René nodded, still watchful.

"What is your idea, my lad? Why go in for trading?"

"Money. I want to go to school."

"To school? And so you want to make money for schooling?"

René looked him fair in the eyes. "Yes, sir, I want money."

"Ay, ye're no tellin' mickle," said Mr. Hamilton, dropping

into his Doric. "Read that." He thrust the letter which he had been reading at the boy.

As René read a flush came up through the brown skin.

"Well, lad?"

"I want the money, and I am going to school."

Mr. Hamilton laughed.

"Come and make up your pack," he said.

René stepped outside and whistled. Black Hawk appeared. It took the greater part of the morning to make up the pack. Mr. Hamilton soon found that the young traders knew what they wanted, and what was more important, knew what the Indians wanted, and what was most of all important, knew what the Indians ought to want. There was no rubbish, no pot-metal knives, no silly gewgaws, no shoddy goods.

"No beads?" asked Mr. Hamilton.

"Yes, certainly. Beads, red cloth, some bangles, mirrors, Black Hawk?"

Black Hawk nodded violent approval.

"Squaw like much," he said with a rare smile.

"Squaws?" cried René. "What about the young bucks?"

Black Hawk nodded a doubtful assent.

But René was most careful that there should be a large supply of useful articles, pans, cups, knives, nails, flints and steels, fish hooks, lines, and abundance of tobacco and snuff.

"Going to carry guns?"

"Yes, a good rifle, your best, and two of those new double-barreled pistols," said René, "and enough powder and bullets for our own use."

The merchandise was done up into three packs, which with the canoe would make three carries over the portages. Mr. Hamilton arranged to deliver the packs into Black Hawk's charge at the Upper Landing.

"Now, tell me where you are going?" said Mr. Hamilton as René was about to depart. René regarded him steadily.

"Why?"

"Suppose anything should happen or——"

"Nothing will happen."

"My certie, could ye no get drowned or shot?"

"I'm not going to get drowned or shot. I mean to come back."

"Man, d'ye think ye're Almighty God?"

"No. But I mean to come back." He pointed to Brock's letter. "He expects me to come back. I must come back." There was an impressive dignity and assurance in his tone and manner.

"God grant it, lad," said Mr. Hamilton solemnly. "My heart goes with you. Here, wait a bit." He went to his shelves and made a liberal selection of toothsome edibles. "Take these with you. You will be in your canoe for the first ten days. They won't be too burdensome. And now, good-bye, lad, and God keep ye."

Mr. Hamilton was a Scot, shrewd, hard headed, but as he said good-bye he could not keep a slight tremor from his voice.

There remained for René a call to make at the Brookes Manor. The lady of the house received him warmly and would have him remain to supper.

"No, thank you, Mrs. Brookes. I am off on a trip. A trading trip with the Indians."

"Oh, indeed?" Mrs. Brookes's tone expressed doubtful surprise.

"I must make money. I am going to school. The general—General Brock—you know I——"

"Yes, Eustace told us how much taken he was with you. We were so pleased and proud, René."

René looked at her dubiously.

"Did Eustace say——"

"No, nothing, only that the general encouraged you to study."

"Oh, yes!" said René, much relieved. "I am going to study."

"When do you go, René?"

"To-night. Right away. Our packs are at the Upper Landing—Black Hawk is going with me."

"But can't you wait, René? Edward is about the barn. The colonel is in town—and—Charlotte—Charlotte is off somewhere riding."

With an ache in her heart for him she saw a shadow fall on the boy's eager face. But she could not bring herself to tell him that Charlotte was already overdue at home and might walk in any minute. The sooner this boy-and-girl fancy evaporated, the better for him, yes, and for her girl as well. The risk was too great.

"Good-bye, Mrs. Brookes. I——" The boy choked in his speech.

"Good-bye René, my boy. Good luck go with you. We shall all be glad to see you safe home again." She could not resist the appeal in his eyes. "Charlotte will be sorry not to have said good-bye."

"Tell her—say to her——" he paused to steady his voice; then he drew a deep breath and was master of himself again.

"Will you please say good-bye for me, Mrs. Brookes?" he said in a quiet voice. "And say to Miss Charlotte I was sorry not to see her before I went."

Mrs. Brookes watched him down the shadowy drive through tears.

"Poor boy! Poor boy! I'm afraid he is not the kind that forgets. The whole thing is absurd—still—perhaps it is as well she was not at home this evening."

It was almost dark when Charlotte rode up to the back door and greeted her mother with a cheery call.

"Dinner ready, Mamma? I am hungry as a wolf. Dead with hunger. Anyone here?"

"Yes, a little ago René came to——"

"René? How long ago?" Her voice was shrill with excitement.

"About half an hour—a little more. He was sorry not to see you. He's leaving to-night on some sort of trading expedition with the Indians. He was sorry not to see you to say good-bye."

"Mother, is René going to-night? How is he going?" Charlotte's questions came with sharp insistence.

"I suppose by canoe. At least, he said his stuff was with Black Hawk at the Upper Landing."

The girl swung her horse toward the stable, where she found her brother. "Edward," she said, "I've got to ride down to the Upper Landing. Mamma will understand."

"What are you going there for?"

"Mamma knows. She will tell you," she hastily replied and was away at a gallop.

Charlotte would have found it difficult to put into words her answer to Edward's question. Why was she going to the Upper Landing? To say good-bye to René, of course. She carried the

argument no further. René was going away. She did not even know where, how far, nor why. She might be too late to see him. He had wanted to say good-bye. How would he say good-bye? Her cheeks grew hot at the thought. What would he do? What did she want him to do? That question she put aside. She could not and would not try to answer. She felt wonderfully safe with René. He would never do anything wrong.

Now the lights of the landing could be seen through the trees a few hundred yards away. She let the pony have his head. Her excitement was in his blood. Head down, he tore along as if in the final stretch of a race. Within fifty yards she pulled him down to a trot, and in a minute or two more with heaving flanks to a walk. All at once she was seized with a panic. What would she do at the landing? There would be men there. They would recognize her. What would she say? How account for her presence? For her pony's heaving flanks? She drew up at the crest of the slope to the dock. The moon made everything clear as day. There was a boat loading at the wharf and a crowd of men, but no one that looked like René or Black Hawk. Two men came swaying up the slope, talking loudly and swearing deeply. She had always had a terror of drunken men. You never knew what they would do. Nearer they came. Level with her, they halted abruptly. One swayed toward her pony's head and peered up into her face.

"Hello! Oh, hello, little girl! Waiting for me, eh?" He put his hand on her pony's bridle. Two men came up from behind, padding softly. They were each carrying a pack on a tumpline.

"René!" she cried aloud.

One of them flung his pack to the ground and came running, took a look at the man, leaped at him, seized him by the coat collar, and with both hands and with a mighty heave flung him far into the ditch, where he fell with a thud. Then, turning to the other, he said, "Get out of here, you brute, quick!" The man turned and fled down the slope with stumbling steps.

"Oh, René!" she panted falling upon her pony's neck. "I'm so glad you are here!"

"Charlotte! Charlotte! Are you quite all right? Did they scare you?" René's voice came hoarse.

The man he had flung into the ditch was rising with difficulty. Toward him ran Black Hawk, a knife gleaming in his hand.

"Stop it, Black Hawk!" cried René, springing to him. "Get out of this," he said to the man. "Scoot!"

Terrified and sobered, the man stayed not an instant, but ran down the slope after his companion.

"Come this way, Charlotte." René took the pony's rein. By a side path he led the way down the slope through a clump of trees to the water's edge, where a canoe was tied. Without a word René lifted the girl out of the saddle and stood holding her in his arms. Weak, limp, she lay there clinging to him, her dark eyes gleaming up at him out of her white face, her whole body trembling.

"Charlotte! Charlotte! Tell me! Are you all right? Did he touch you?" asked René, his words choking him.

She closed her eyes in a blissful ecstasy.

"Oh, René! You—are—here." She sighed. "I was—afraid."

"Did the brute touch you?" His arms tightened about her.

"No! oh, no! I was afraid—I would never—you would be gone!" Black Hawk came softly padding by, his pack on his shoulders.

"Oh! Let me go, René," she whispered, pushing him gently away from her.

Immediately he set her on her feet, still holding her by her arms.

"You are not hurt at all?"

"Hurt?" She smiled up at him. "No, no! I'm all right now. But I heard Mamma say you were going away, René, and you are —and—I wanted to see you—to say good-bye. You were going without seeing me, René."

Her voice was exquisitely tender, and her dark eyes full of reproach.

"I wanted to see you. I went to see you," said René, looking at her hungrily. "But I—oh, Charlotte! What's the use?" His voice was bitter and hopeless. She looked so lovely in the moonlight, so exquisite, so remote. Besides, she seemed so helpless. He must take thought for her. If she were only at her own house door, yes, even in her mother's presence, he might have

taken her in his arms and told her what his heart ached to tell her. But here, looking so helpless, so alone and unguarded, so much a child . . .

"I wanted to say good-bye, René," she repeated, smiling in his face. "You see, I never knew you were going till Mamma told me you had gone. What has happened?"

René put his hands resolutely behind him, regarding her silently.

"Why are you going, René? And where? And for how long? You see I want to know so much."

In voiceless misery he stood before her.

"Can't you tell me, René? You see they are talking of sending me away to school—to England—for two years, or perhaps three."

"Away! To England!" His voice was hardly above a whisper. "Away to England! Three years!" he repeated.

"Yes, René, and that's why I came. I just couldn't bear to think of not seeing you again before I went." Her voice was softly tender, and something not the moonlight glowed in her eyes. René groaned aloud.

"Oh, Charlotte! Three years! That will be—the end."

"The end, René?" Again she smiled at him. "It will be a long time, René—" her voice trembled—"a long, long time, René—but not the end." It was the tremor in her voice that did for René. Gently, reverently, he put his arms about her.

"Yes! Yes! The end, Charlotte. You—will—never come back to me Charlotte. You will be different."

"No, no, René! Not the end! I will come back, and I will be just the same, René. Oh," she cried, putting her hands upon his breast in a sudden passion, "I shall never change! Never, never!"

Her appealing hands and voice recalled René to himself. She was only a child, after all. He was a man and must play a man's part. He must first of all think of her. He put her away from him. "Come! I'll take you home, Charlotte. Your people will be anxious. Come! We shall go by the path. That will be quicker."

A swift and subtle change came over her face. A shadow of disappointment. René's voice had lost its eager, boyish passion.

He was a man and was thinking of her as a child. Her heart grew chill. What had she done? She had acted like a silly child. A deep shame fell upon her.

"You don't need to come with me, René," she said quietly. "Just see me beyond the village. There won't be any danger. I am not afraid. And you must get away. You *are* going to-night?"

"Yes, we are going to-night. The water is quiet and the light good. The wind rises in the day often and may hold us up. But do you think I would let you go home alone? Not much!"

"You don't need to come, René." The girl's voice was very steady and her head high.

"No, but I want to come, and I'm going to come."

"But, René, that will mean another two hours for you?"

"What difference? But I must not make you late. Do they know where you are?"

"Edward knows. I told him as I left."

"Then he will be here very soon. Come quick. We shall go by the path. Black Hawk will tell Edward. The moon is good. The path will be lovely. Come, Charlotte. Hurry! At least till we are safe on the path." A few words of instruction to Black Hawk and they were off, René trotting lightly beside the pony while the going was good. The path by the woods and fields was narrow enough in places to make walking in single file necessary, but most of it was wide enough to permit two abreast. On his way René told of meeting with the commander-in-chief. He was careful, however, to say nothing of his special commission to the Western Indians. That was the general's secret and therefore inviolate. Charlotte was thrilled with René's picture of the general and more particularly with his graciousness to René.

"I think that is simply splendid, René," she cried, "and now you'll go West and find out all about the Indians for him, and of course he'll——"

René stopped dead in his tracks.

"What are you talking about, Charlotte? Who said I was going to find out anything about the Indians for him?"

"But aren't you? Never mind, I won't tell anyone. I think it's just splendid, and I'm awfully glad I know."

René was disturbed and disgusted.

"But how in the world did you find out?"

"Oh, pshaw, René! How does a girl find out anything? I knew from your voice what you were feeling about this trading trip, and so I knew it wasn't just a trading trip. Besides, didn't the general ask you all about the Indians?"

"I'm a great scout!" he grumbled. "Telling everybody everything."

"But, René, I'm not everybody. Besides, don't you want me to know?"

"I'm glad now you know, but——"

"And you didn't tell me, so that's all right. And of course I won't tell a soul. Oh, it's just fine, and no one but you and I will know."

Charlotte was quite gay over the discovery. So delighted indeed that she quite forgot her sense of humiliation. She was again his chum, his helper, his comrade, once she knew his secret. This was a new bond between them.

"But I *am* going to school," said René; "that's quite true."

"I know. And you'll be a great lawyer or something when I come home from England."

"Three years! You will see a lot of swells over there."

They went on in silence. René had his hand on the pony's neck.

"And you will be with the general and doing all sorts of wonderful things."

"And you'll get to be a fine young lady, and——"

"And you'll be living in Kingston or York, or perhaps Quebec, and——"

"And you'll come back with fine clothes and fine manners and——"

"Oh, won't it be lovely?"

"Huh! And you won't look at a fellow in buckskins and all."

"But will you be in buckskins, Réne? Oh, I do hope you'll be in buckskins when I see you again. But you won't. You'll be in uniform. You'll be an officer. Why, you'll be twenty, René!"

"And you'll be eighteen!"

They were appalled at the ghastly prospect of advanced age.

"No more fun!" said Charlotte sadly. "It will be horrid."

"And you'll be proper and polite, and I'll have to call you 'Miss Brookes.'"

"Oh, René, would you? Oh, promise you won't! Promise me, René. Promise you will call me 'Charlotte'!"

"I will if you call me 'René.'"

"All right, that's a bargain. And I won't be the one that will change it. There, I give you my hand on it." And she did, and René quite forgot to give her her hand back again but held it fast.

There was a far-distant sound of galloping hoofs.

"That's Edward, René," said Charlotte breathlessly. "He'll be here soon—and—and—oh, René, I want to say good-bye now." She pulled up her pony to a halt and sat looking down at him, a world of fear in her lovely eyes.

René held her hand in both of his.

"Good-bye, Charlotte," he said softly. He was kissing her hand with passionate hot kisses.

She leaned down toward him, putting her other hand upon his bowed head.

"Look at me, René," she whispered.

He kept his head down, pressing hot kisses upon her hand.

"You're only a little girl, Charlotte. Oh, it isn't fair to you. You're just a child."

"No, René!" she breathed. "Never again a child. Oh, René! Good-bye. Say good-bye. Quick!"

He looked up into her eyes, soft, tender, filled with tears, and was lost. A moment later she was in his arms, and he was kissing not her hands but her lips.

"Oh, René! I was afraid you wouldn't," she murmured ecstatically.

The galloping hoofs sounded nearer.

"Good-bye, Charlotte. Whatever happens I won't forget. Never! Never! Jump, quick, quick!"

Still she clung to him. The hoofs sounded very near.

"Jump! Jump, Charlotte!" She sprang into the saddle.

"Oh, René! Three years! And you, with those wild Western Indians."

"They can't hurt me! Never fear! Nothing can hurt me! But, Charlotte, I shouldn't have kissed you. How could I help it?"

"Of course you couldn't help it, you silly boy. And it would have been horrid of you if you hadn't. After me coming all this way just to——"

They walked on together, René with shoulders squared.

"Remember, Charlotte, you are free as a bird. Free to do as you like."

She laughed gayly.

"Huh-huh! Free to do just as I like. And you too, René."

"No, not me! Never free from you. Not while I live. Never free from you."

Again her laugh rang out joyously.

"Charlotte! Is that you?"

"Yes. Oh, it's you, Father? I thought it might be Edward. Where did you come from? René, it's Father." Her voice rang out in an innocent and glad surprise. "René, you won't need to come any farther."

CHAPTER XVII

THE BROOKES' PARTY

THE keen nip of the March wind had made the road a glare of ice over which the cutter runners roared like a snare drum as Billy Badger's team sped along the river road. He was driving his friend Dr. Hector MacCrimmon and his sister Miss Elspeth to a party at the Brookes Manor House. The party was to be a very great event. More than one hundred invitations had been issued. Lieutenant-Governor Gore and his lady had promised to drive down from York for the gathering, and with them a score or two of the élite of York's most exclusive citizens, the Drummonds, the Jarvises, the Jacksons, the McGills, the MacNabs, the Mercers, the Olmsteads, the Robinsons, the Vanzanters, the Spencers, the Ridouts, the Howards—in short, as Billy put it, "the hull caboodle of the tip-toppers will be there."

"I wish you were going too, Billy. You would enjoy seeing all the people," said Miss Elspeth MacCrimmon.

"I'd like to see their horses and outfits anyway," Billy acknowledged.

"Yes, and you would like the party too, Billy. They all like you so much, and you are such fun," she said with a little sigh.

"Yes, I used to make a little fun for them, 'specially after a round or two of Scotch. But you know I'm off all that now, Miss Elspeth."

"And you the best dancer in the settlement, too. It's a pity, Billy. I've seen you at the reels."

"Yes, I can tap off the reel, and a hoedown, too, if it comes to that."

"I wish you were going, Billy. Could you not come in for a wee bittee? And Hector would like you to come. You know, Billy, he would be much the better for your being there," said the little lady.

"Tut-tut, now, Elspeth," said Hector. "Be reasonable."

"Can you deny it, then? And ashamed I am to ask you," said his sister a little sharply.

"No, I cannot deny it, Elspeth. Nor do I wish to deny it. The whole settlement knows well by this time that when Billy is with me it is the better for me. He is with me as a cat is with a mouse."

"Aw, git out now, MacCrimmon!" exclaimed Billy.

"Indeed, it is true. And if you keep at me much longer the day will come when you will be making a teetotaler of me, and that you will," MacCrimmon ended with a distinct sigh.

"And why should you be mourning over that, Hector?" said his sister. "A man might be worse than a teetotaler."

"Saints above! What are you saying, woman? A MacCrimmon a teetotaler! And a piper at that!"

"Well, Hector, I will not be denying it would be a most unusual thing—indeed, what you might be calling a phenomenon. But, Hector, if you are ever to be your own man again you may have to come to it and give up the piping and the drinking."

"Elspeth, you are not suggesting that there is anything sinful in the piping or in a glass of sound Glenlivet! Think of the godly men—our own minister and the elders, the most of them —who do not disdain their glass. Would you ask, now, the Reverend Mr. Dun to become a teetotaler?"

"You bet I would, if he was my minister," said Billy with emphasis.

Elspeth, however, hastened to disdain anything so revolutionary, adding with caution, "But you are not an elder, Hector."

"No, nor me," said Billy. "I was going straight to hell with it and never knew it till I started to quit. Then I got religion. I tried to work them together. They wouldn't mix. It was one or the other. I couldn't give up the religion, now, could I?"

"No, no, Billy, and a good thing it was for me," said MacCrimmon gravely. "That I frankly and fully acknowledge. You are the first teetotaler I could abide. You have done a great thing for me."

They drove on in silence till the lights of the Brookes Manor House began to gleam through the trees.

At that very moment Hubert was entering the Radcliffe house with the intention of conveying Hope Radcliffe to the party at the Brookes Manor House and with the determination to use this opportunity to his best advantage. Hubert was in a high level of emotional exaltation. For the past four months he had been sailing the political high seas with the big captains of the People's Party. As special secretary to Judge Thorpe he had practically managed that gentleman's campaign for him, and with conspicuous success. Against the combined influences of the Court party, led by Lieutenant-Governor Gore himself, the reformers had swept the polls and had sent their man to the Assembly to fill the seat made vacant by the death of the former member, Mr. Weekes, at the hands of his fellow member, Mr. Dickson.

It was Hubert who had organized the successful fight in the Assembly against the attempt made by the Court Party backed by the Governor to unseat Thorpe on the constitutional plea that a judge was ineligible for election to the Legislative Assembly.

In an exultant spirit of political success it was that he entered the home of the young lady whose heart it was his purpose to carry by storm that very night. Resplendent in his new evening dress, elate with his recent triumphs, eager to proclaim his love, he burst in upon the young lady waiting him in her new party dress in her father's parlor.

"Hope!" he cried coming to her with hands outstretched.

"Why, Hubert, how splendid you look! My! You are quite beautiful!" Her frank, cheery tone, her complete self-possession, the utter absence of self-conscious emotion chilled his passionate ardor, shattered the picture his fond fancy had painted of a manly lover sweeping a shy and trembling maiden into his masterful arms.

"Sit down, won't you? Dad and Mother have gone to the party quite half an hour ago. How wonderful you look! And what a wonderful time you have had! Oh, we have been hearing about your triumphs! Your speeches and your caucuses. Yes, and your dinners and parties. A very popular young man we have heard. You will have to come and tell us all about it. It will take days and days to tell all." Her perfect poise punctured his swelling sense of victory. He went utterly flat. A sickening sense of inadequacy fell

upon him, filling him with rage at himself and at this self-possessed, cheery girl. Her loveliness smote him with a new wonder. His desire for her choked his breathing. He sat down on the far side of the fireplace, silently struggling with his rage and his desire.

"You just came home to-day, didn't you?" Hope continued. "Edward told me you were coming."

"Yes, an hour or so ago."

"You drove yourself down. Edward told me you had Prince with you. That must have been awfully fine, driving about York with—with your swell friends—and—and—with your fine ladies." She shook her head archly at him.

"Ladies? I was too busy to bother with ladies much," he grunted. "Fighting the government and keeping Judge Thorpe in his place and all."

Abruptly he stood up.

"Hope!"

His desperate tone startled her. She rose quietly to her feet and exclaimed a little breathlessly, "Don't you think we ought to go? It is awfully late, you know. And your mother will be disappointed if her gallant young man is not there to shed glory on the party. They have an orchestra, Edward said, and Dr. MacCrimmon with the pipes, and Highland dancing—with prizes—Ed told me, and Arabella——"

"Quit it, Hope!" His tone was sharp, imperious. He moved to her side. "Hope, you drive me mad. Tell me—I want to tell you—oh, Hope!" He caught her by the arms and held her fast. Her face was pale and distressed. "I can't stand this any longer." His words came rushing. "I won't stand it. I must know, Hope. Do you care for me at all?"

She answered him gayly.

"Of course I do, you silly boy. I care for you a great deal. But let us not be too serious to-night."

"But I will be serious. I am serious, and you must be serious."

"Hubert, give me three months—to be sure—I must be sure," she begged.

"Three months! Three months! You ask this?" He turned from her and took up his coat.

"All right," he muttered hoarsely. "Three months."

"Hubert," she said gently, as to an impatient child. "Let us be happy to-night. Let us have a good time. I want you to have a good time with your people to-night. And I want to have a good time too." She smiled at him.

"A good time?" he replied savagely. "Why, certainly we'll have a good time. Why not?"

All the way to the manor house she snuggled up close to him and chatted gayly, drawing from him the story of his four months in York, so that in spite of his disappointment he threw off his gloom and told her of his tribulations and his triumphs in the great campaign.

It was a great night for Hubert. A great night for his family. Partisan politics were cast aside. They were all proud of him. He had achieved a noble triumph, and he belonged to them all alike. His family openly rejoiced in him. Even his father, who had been cut to the heart by his open espousal of the Jacobins, was proud of his brilliant abilities and received him graciously. Also the Lieutenant-Governor appeared to be willing to forget his hostile activities during the past weeks, and with the secret knowledge he possessed of the overthrow of Judge Thorpe was the more ready to be gracious to the son of his friend and supporter, Colonel Brookes.

It was a brilliant scene and eminently characteristic of the time. The Governor and his staff in their dashing uniforms were hardly more splendid than the gentlemen from York and other parts of the home district in their cutaway coats and colored waistcoats —many of them antique in mode and more than a trifle worn— their ruffled shirts, knee breeches, silk stockings, and silver-buckled shoes. And their ladies in silk and satin crinolines or in gorgeous calicoes and muslins lent to the scene a semblance of metropolitan splendor and gayety. With the more fashionably dressed guests mingled the immediate neighbors of humbler rank, the men in somber homespun, their women in winseys and flannels, the beautiful and altogether creditable products of their own fingers.

It was during the supper hour that this delightful harmony was rudely shattered, and by Vincent Howard, the youthful son of

one of the colonel's oldest friends. With a sleigh load of young bloods from York young Howard had arrived late and burst in upon the party with important news. The young fellow, as was too often the case with him, was already in a highly exhilarated condition from the flasks of the company who had driven down with him. After greeting his host and hostess, young Howard turned to His Excellency, whom he knew well, and in a voice of cheery congratulation, heard by the whole company, exclaimed:

"Well, sir, he's done for at last. Just heard before leaving town. Congratulations, sir!"

"Who's done for? What is it?" Questioning voices rose on every side.

"Old Judge Thorpe—dismissed! Bounced from the bench! Ha!-ha! And serves him right!"

His voice penetrated to the outer room, catching Hubert's ear.

"Judge Thorpe! What about Judge Thorpe?" he inquired.

"Young Howard says he is dismissed from the bench."

"Dismissed? Judge Thorpe? Dismissed?" Hubert pushed his way into the parlor.

"Who says Judge Thorpe's dismissed?" he demanded in a clear voice. "You, Howard? What is your authority?"

"Hush, Howard! Order! Order!" Many guests sought to prevent outbreak in the presence of the Governor.

"What is your authority, Howard?" sternly repeated Hubert.

"The very best, Brookes. Oh, you've got to take your medicine, old chap," said Howard jauntily.

"I refuse to believe it. Not even this government would dare to commit such an outrage."

"Outrage? Nonsense! The old traitor! He is an Irish rebel and ought to be hanged." Howard's voice was thick and his poise slightly unstable.

"Howard, you are a fool! You are hardly responsible, otherwise I would say you were a liar." Hubert's voice, cool, clear, deliberate, chilled every sound into silence.

Half a dozen hands held Howard fast. Over the hubbub the Governor's voice was heard, calm and decisive.

"Mr. Brookes! Gentlemen, a word please. The announcement of His Honor Judge Thorpe's dismissal is premature, but his dis-

missal is none the less a fact—a regrettable fact but inevitable."

"May I ask, sir, since you have referred to the matter, upon what ground the government took this very unusual step?"

"Hubert, you forget yourself!" exclaimed his father in indignation.

"Father, may I suggest that this has become my affair." Hubert's manner was perfectly respectful. "For the past four months I have had the honor to act as secretary and agent for the member for Simcoe, Durham, and East York. His Excellency has just told us that the government has taken the extraordinary step of dismissing him from his judgeship. I am respectfully asking the reason for this act."

"Hubert, you must not. I forbid——"

"Allow me, Colonel," Gore interposed. "Not for a moment would I impugn this young man's motives or his perfect loyalty." Here Hubert bowed low. "But he has been sadly misled—and I regret it exceedingly—by his associates."

"Do I understand that Your Excellency declines to state the ground for the government's action? May I remind you, sir, that the attempt to unseat Judge Thorpe on the ground of his twofold tenure of office failed? That reason can hardly be adduced. May I also remind you that the reasons given for the dismissals of Sheriff Willcocks and of Surveyor General Charles Burton Wyatt from office could hardly apply in this case? There must be another reason."

At the reference to the government's dismissal of these two officials, which everyone in the colony knew was due to their active support of opposition candidates at the polls, the Governor's face became purple.

"The reason for the government's action," said the Governor with deliberate distinctness, "must be plain to all patriotic citizens. Judge Thorpe has openly professed himself as a champion of democratic principles which I consider inimical to the security of this colony and of His Majesty's authority therein."

"From very intimate and personal knowledge let me assure Your Excellency that no man in this room is more soundly patriotic than is Judge Thorpe."

"His deeds proclaim him a highly dangerous man."

"A traitor!" shouted young Howard. "He ought to be hanged."

At Howard's word Hubert's face went white.

"Traitor!" he cried, flinging up his hand. "They are traitors whose tyrannous exercise of power deprives loyal citizens of their just right."

The colonel stepped forward in furious wrath.

"Hubert, you have insulted His Excellency in my house. You must apologize or leave this house at once."

"No, no, Colonel, the young man is——" began Gore hastily.

"Your Excellency, this touches my honor. Not even you can interfere. Hubert, your apology!"

"I had no intention of insulting Lieutenant-Governor Gore. I regret my haste," said Hubert quietly.

"Thank you, young man!" said Gore. "I am sure——"

"You apologize and withdraw your words!" demanded the colonel hotly.

"I have expressed my regret. I had no desire to insult His Excellency."

"Come, sir! No quibbling!" said his father angrily. "Do you withdraw your words?"

An angry murmur buzzed through the room.

"Withdraw my words? No! Before God, never!"

No longer as father and son, but man to man, they stood fronting each other.

"Then go!" thundered the colonel, his rigid arm and finger indicating the door.

For two breathless moments they looked each other in the eye.

"Father!" The tremor in Hubert's voice was distinctly audible. "You mean it?"

"No! God forbid such sacrilege!" Through the company, hurling men and women to right and left, came Hector MacCrimmon. His face was pale, his dark eyes glittering with inner fires. "Your Excellency! Gentlemen, listen to me!" he began.

"MacCrimmon, keep out. This is my affair," said the colonel angrily.

"No! I will not be keeping out!" roared MacCrimmon. "Who will keep me out?" He swept the company with flaming eyes. "This is no longer your business alone. It is my business! It is

your business!" His hand outstretched toward the company. "It is the business of all sane men. I beg you all to listen to this which came to hand this very day." He pulled from his pocket a recent copy of the London *Times* and read a despatch from the seat of war.

"Hear to that, will you?" he cried. "And the Corsican tyrant with great Russia prostrate at his feet and pledged to enforce his Berlin decrees against us enters Portugal to close the Mediterranean ports against Great Britain and cut off her trade with Brazil. And all the power at his command he is bringing to bear upon the republic next us here to declare war upon us, offering his support for the conquest of Canada. In the name of God, is this a time for petty feuds, for setting Canadian men at each other's throats? Great Britain's trade is ruined. Her mills stand idle. Her people face financial ruin. I appeal to Your Excellency. Let us have done with this madness. These men who differ from us—I am on your side, sir—these men are no traitors but loyal Canadians. Let us be patient, yea, generous. Let us have peace.

"And you, Colonel, my oldest and best friend in this colony. Be patient. This is only a young man. And you, my lad, listen to me, I beseech you. I am an old man. Forty and five years ago, in a chief's house in a Highland glen, stood two men as you two stand to-night, pride driving them apart. That night I left my father's house. Twenty years later I returned to look down upon him in his coffin, pouring useless tears upon his face. For twenty and five years I have lamented my folly. Give heed to me, Hubert"—his voice broke—"or all your life long you will rue it." The tears came into his eyes.

Hubert waited silently, looking at his father.

"Dr. MacCrimmon," said the colonel, "I appreciate your motives. In my presence and in my house the representative of His Majesty has been insulted. In this my honor is involved. "Hubert, do you withdraw your words?"

"What of my honor, sir?" said Hubert quietly.

"Your honor! Your honor!" cried MacCrimmon, lifting his hands high above his head. "God in heaven, will you listen to them! Call it your honor! So did I. It is just pride, stinking pride, in the both of you, and I suffered for it five and forty years."

Stubbornly the colonel kept his place, facing his son, waiting his reply.

"Hubert!" It was his mother's voice. The boy shuddered as if struck a blow.

"Father, I am sorry I spoke in this home as I did," he said.

"You withdraw the words?"

"How can I? They are true."

"Then go!" said the colonel, and again his rigid arm and finger indicated the door.

For a few terrible moments Hubert remained fixed in his tracks, then slowly turned and moved toward the door. His mother came quickly to his side, took his arm, and moved away step by step with him, a smile on her face, her head held high. At the door she turned.

"Dr. MacCrimmon," she said lightly. "If you please!" MacCrimmon sprang to her side. "Dr. MacCrimmon, you would help me?"

"To the limit of my power, madam!"

"Then strike up a reel," said she breathlessly. "Let the dance go on. Make light of this. Quick! At once!"

Without a word MacCrimmon sprang to obey her, and before the company had realized what had happened the stirring notes of the Reel o' Tulloch were ringing through the room.

"Come along, Arabella," cried Edward, catching the girl's hand. "Come, Talbot, get your partner. Come, everybody."

There was an immediate rally to his call. With eager haste and with feverish hilarity men seized partners and swung them out upon the floor. It was a magnificent gesture on Edward's part, and magnificent response upon the part of his guests.

"Hubert, slip up to your room," whispered his mother. "I will come soon."

His mother found him in his bedroom putting his things together. She came to him, put her arms round his neck and drew his head to her breast.

"You are going away, my son?"

"Don't speak to me, Mother! You know what I must do, don't you?" She drew away from him.

"Yes, my son, I know." She spoke quietly. "I know, I know. I have feared this for long, and now it has come."

She was wreathing her fingers in tearless agony.

"I cannot stay longer. He doesn't understand. He treats me like a child. He is not fair or just."

"Hubert, your father is a just man. His point of view is different from yours." Her voice was quietly dignified.

"Mother, I beg your pardon! I should not have said that. I hate to hurt you, Mother. But you know—you see——"

"Yes, my son, if you cannot bear it I shall not—I cannot ask. But, oh, my son, my son, I don't see how I can let you go." Her voice broke into sobbing.

"Mother, Mother, don't do that, don't do that. It is better that I go, for a time, at least."

"But not in anger, Hubert."

"No, no—not in anger. I was angry, not at Father so much as at that pompous fool."

"But to-night, Hubert? Must you go to-night?"

"Yes, Mother, it is better to-night."

"But where, my boy, where?"

"I have thought of this before. I shall go to Boston. I can easily get a position there. I know my work——"

"Boston! Yes, we have many friends there. I shall write."

"No, Mother, promise me not to. I must go on my own."

"Very well. Many will be glad of your services." She had no fear for her son. "But, Hubert, never mind your trunk to-night. Edward will bring it to Hinds's Hotel to-morrow."

"No, Mother, it is better to finish it to-night."

"Hubert, my son!" putting her hands out to him. "Help me to be brave. Let me pack your trunk and send it by Ed to-morrow."

Hubert paused in his packing.

"All right, Mother. I shall take my bag only. I will only be a few minutes. Go back to the people. They will miss you. Let no one know to-night. We don't want any heroics—any fuss before that crowd. Keep them dancing."

"You need not fear for me, Hubert." Her voice was quiet again and fully controlled.

"No, Mother, I would never fear for you. You are great stuff. None better." He took her suddenly in his arms. "But, oh, Mother, Mother, I shall miss you." His tears were falling fast as he kissed his mother again and again.

"You will miss me, I know, Hubert." No word of her own agony. "I grieve for you, and I know, Hubert, you will not shame me." She was holding him tight and whispering passionately, her lips close to his face. "You will not shame me."

He put her from him a little, holding her face in his hands and looking straight into her eyes.

"Mother, dear, I am no great saint, but as God hears me I will not shame you!"

"I know, I know," she whispered, again drawing his head to her breast. "Good-bye! Good-bye, my son! My first-born son!"

"Go, Mother! Go! Go! You will break me up."

She immediately released him, removed the trace of tears from her face with her kerchief, smiled at him quietly, and walked toward the door. "I shall see you before you go. Edward will drive you."

"Fifteen minutes, Mother, will do!"

With serene face she looked in upon the dancers. The whole company was engaged in desperate efforts to be jolly. Hector MacCrimmon was making wild music with his pipes. The floor of the entire suite of rooms, dining room, parlor, and sitting room, was taken up with whooping eight-some reels.

Hope Radcliffe was not one of the dancers. She was seemingly busy assisting Mrs. Brookes in supervising the supper arrangements, but her eye was on the door leading to the back stairs. From the dancing Edward made his appearance. Immediately Hope signaled him.

"I want to talk to you, Edward. Where can we go?" Her voice, usually so steady, was hurried and shaken.

"Come into my office, Hope," replied Edward, leading the way.

"Edward, Hubert is leaving to-night? Tell me!"

"Yes, Hope, he is. Going in a few minutes."

"Leaving the country?"

"Yes, going to Boston, I think." Edward's eyes were full of pain. "It is a shame! It's not fair, and yet—well, Father is rather

hot tempered, you know, and Hubert takes things so seriously."

"Oh, he is just a boy, Edward. Just a boy! And I have been so —I mean I haven't treated him—oh, I can't explain, Edward, but I want to see him. He is going away. He may not come back for years—for years, Edward." Her hands were pressed hard on her breast. "And he doesn't know——" Into her eyes there came a sudden rush of tears. "Oh, what shall I do? I was hard with him to-night. And now he is going away from me—from us. I must see him, Edward. I must—I must! Can't you get him?" Her wonted self-control was gone. She was struggling with sobs.

"All right, Hope. Don't cry like that." He put his arm round her shoulder. She clung to him, sobbing.

"No one understands him—but me."

Edward was deathly pale.

"I'll get him for you, Hope. Trust me."

The door burst open. They sprang sharply apart. Hubert stood before them, his face ghastly, his eyes glittering. For some moments he regarded them steadily, his eyes going from one to the other.

"So that's why!" His words came slowly, bitterly. "You were fooling me! Three months! Why didn't you tell me the truth? You are in love with my brother! Why in God's name didn't you tell me?"

"Hubert," said Edward sharply, "don't be a fool!"

"You too, Edward! Yes, I'm a fool! A cursed fool! You knew I loved this girl! I told you so! You deceived me! You, Edward! I thought I could trust you, at least. Why didn't you tell me you wanted her?"

"Hubert!" cried Hope with wide-open eyes. "You are crazy! He doesn't want me!"

"No? Look at him! Ask him!"

Hope turned her startled eyes upon Edward.

"Edward, tell him——" Edward's eyes halted her. The red blood overflowed her cheeks, her forehead, her neck. She covered her face with her hands and groaned piteously. "Oh, God help me!"

"It only remains that I should give you my blessing. Well, take it. Why not? Thank God, I am out of it all. I had thought of re-

turning in a year or so. But not now. Never again! Never again!"

Again the door opened. It was his mother.

"Hubert, do you wish to speak to your father?"

"No! To no one. Why should I? They will all rejoice to see me go. Only you, Mother." He took her in his arms. "You, Mother, you love me. You won't fail me. You want me." His voice shook.

"Hush, my son. God knows I want you. And only God knows how much." She glanced at the other two. "Edward, is the cutter ready? See about it at once." Her voice was cold and commanding.

Edward rose, looked at Hope, at his brother, stood irresolute a moment.

"Go, Edward, at once please." The quiet authority in her tone calmed them all. Without a word Edward left the room.

"Have you said good-bye to Hope, Hubert?"

"To Hope? Why, yes, Mother, we have said—good-bye. I have given her my parting blessing." His laugh stabbed like a dagger.

"My son," said his mother in a voice gravely kind, "this is not the time for cruel words."

Hubert looked steadily at Hope's pale and tortured face.

"You are right, Mother. You're always right. Good-bye, Hope. Have I said a cruel word? Forgive me. I want only your happiness. Believe me, only your happiness. Good-bye."

"Good-bye!" whispered the girl with cold, blue lips.

"Oh, Mother!" It was the cry of a little boy.

"My son! My son!" She drew him to her.

The beat of the dancing feet, the whoops of the dancers, the skirling of the pipes filled the silence of the slow-passing moments while they each drank to the last drops their first cup of common sorrow.

For nearly twenty years the two boys had grown each into the other's heart. They had slept in the same bed, they had gone to school the first day together. They had fought each other and each for the other. As they grew they had shared their possessions. They had had one purse between them. Their friends they had in common. They possessed those complementary qualities that make for perfect friendship. The older boy impulsive, temperamental, quick in mind and in action; the younger steady,

cool in temper, slow-moving in mind, rock-like in purpose, changeless in affection.

To Edward, Hubert had been an adored leader whom he could follow with a chivalrous abandon into no matter what mad and desperate ventures. His devotion Hubert had accepted as a matter of course, knowing that in the tightest of tight corners Edward would be at his back without question or parley. The discovery that Edward had failed him in the hour of his supreme need, had proved a traitor, filled him, first with a bewildering pain, then with a kind of blind fury. He found himself standing amid the ruins of his whole life structure, stricken, incapable of reasoned thought. His father's imperious and stubborn temper he could understand. He had always been like that. For him he made allowance. As for Hope, she had a perfect right to make her own choice. But Edward! That Edward, his brother, after all these years of unbroken and unquestioned loyalty, should play him false overwhelmed him. He had one blind, furious desire to get away from him—from them all. There was only his mother. She was like the Niagara escarpment. Nothing would change her.

At the door he found the horse and cutter, with Sandy the stable boy in attendance and Edward with the reins in his hands.

"Sandy, you will go with me. Get in," he ordered.

"I'll drive you, Hubert," said his brother eagerly.

"No!"

"Hubert, let me drive you." The pitiful appeal was without effect.

"No!" Hubert took the reins from his brother and sprang into the cutter.

"Hubert! Oh, Hubert! Don't go that way. I want——"

"Want? You've got all you want, I guess!"

"Won't you say good-bye, Hubert?" The boy stood awkwardly with hand outstretched, tears running down his face.

"Good-bye? Yes! Glad to! Good-bye!" He laughed aloud. He snatched up the whip. "Get along, Prince!" The whip came down with a savage lash. With a wild series of plunges Prince dashed down the avenue.

"Good-bye! Ha-ha! Good-bye! Why, certainly! Good-bye!"

The mocking voice came back through the night. Edward stood motionless, listening till the cutter was out of hearing, then walked as an old man walks toward the stable. He had lost what to him had been the dearest thing in life, his brother's love—the dearest but one.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DARKENING OF THE SUN

THE new Piqua lies in a fold of the Great Miami, one of the encircling arms which the Ohio throws around a vast and densely wooded, deep-soiled stretch of American land. At the back of the Indian village is a heavy pine forest climbing up a rocky slope, beyond which flows the Miami. In front of the village stretches a level patch of prairie, in summer waving with maize, but in March brown and bare with snow wreaths here and there melting under the spring sun into rivulets. On these bare fields now graze some straying cattle picking their living among the snow wreaths. These are the property of an adventurous settler from Kentucky who, eager to take advantage of the Treaty of Greenville, accursed of the Indians and challenged by the greatest of their chiefs, resolved to take his chance and make a home for himself and his young family in this fertile land now claimed under treaty by the young American republic, but for one thousand years the heritage and home of the Shawnees, Delawares, Kickapoos, and other tribes, their common hunting ground.

To-day the village is humming with life and movement.

To-day six hundred picked warriors, at the invitation of Tecumseh the great confederator, son of Pukeshinwau, representing almost all the Indian tribes from far Florida on the south to the Canadian border on the north—Cherokees and Mandans, Pottawattomies, Wyandots, Miamis, Mohicans, and Delawares have come to a great council at Piqua.

It is a great day in the life of Tecumseh. As he stands at the door of his tent, looking out with gloomy and foreboding eyes over the village whose size has been doubled by the rows of wigwams and huts, the temporary homes of the visiting Indians, his mind goes back over the last quarter of a century and more. Grue-

some pictures are before his eyes. He sees his eldest brother Cheeseekau rousing his mother at dead of night at old Piqua to hear the tale of the destruction of Pukeshinwau and his Shawnee warriors by the soldiers of King George, dispatched by the Governor of Virginia under the command of Generals Lewis and Clark. Later he sees the pale faces of his two brothers slain by American soldiers. There comes to him a vivid memory of his hurried flight by night from the burning village with his mother and younger brothers. That was twenty-seven years ago, and through all those years he has steadfastly cherished the single purpose, not so much to avenge his dead kindred, but to establish some rampart of defence for his people against the encroachments of the white man.

It is a sad and cruel story, the story of the march of Christian culture upon the simplicity and barbarity of a people in whose uncultured heart burned the passionate fires of liberty, justice, and truth; fires which in those outraged hearts flamed into the lurid red of hate, of cruelty, bloody, relentless. The High Judge who holds the scales of eternal justice and weighs the nations as in a balance will doubtless be able—none other can—to estimate the fraction of preponderation between the invader and the invaded in those savage pioneer wars.

He is looking now upon the new Piqua, which possesses this advantage at least over the old Piqua, laid waste a quarter of a century ago: this Piqua is capable of defence. With those two hundred Shawnee warriors exterminated from old Piqua he could hold his ground even against those nine hundred and seventy of Kentucky's picked riflemen. To-day he sees something of the realization of his dream. The representatives of a great Indian confederacy are camped about him. Can he but weld them into one living united Indian confederacy he is confident he can bring the Americans to terms. His great asset is his own personality. These chiefs and sub-chiefs have come to believe in him.

But there is another magnet which has drawn from their far distant villages these Indian chiefs and their warriors. Beside Tecumseh there stands his brother Tenskwatawa, orator and prophet, gifted with heart-shaking power and persuasive speech and claiming the special guidance of the Great Shawan, Guardian

Angel of the Shawnees, the Lord of Light, the supreme Ruler of all the Indian tribes. The Prophet has accepted the derisive challenge of the Governor of Ohio.

"Let the Prophet make the moon change her course. Let him make the sun stand still. Then you may believe that he speaks with the voice of the Great Spirit."

To-morrow is the great day when the Prophet shall demonstrate that he speaks with the voice of the Great Spirit. He will not only make the sun stand still but he will darken his light as well.

Standing upon the open plain, in full view of all the encampment, is the cone-shaped wigwam of the Prophet, Tenskwatawa, the Open Door. On one side six hundred pairs of black eyes rest upon that conical wigwam with curious and anxious fear. On the other side, some quarter of a mile distant, other eyes regard the same tent with a derisive scorn. A company of the Governor's soldiers are camped there, together with a nondescript body of camp followers, hunters, farmers, traders, gathered from all parts to witness the discomfiture of this bombastic, blatant fakir, the Prophet of the Shawnees.

In the center of the Shawnees' encampment stands the wigwam of Tecumseh himself. Beside the Great Chief's wigwam stands a humbler wigwam, the temporary home of a young Wyandot chief Wahcheeka, with his aged father a great chief among the Wyandots, and his beautiful sister Lukowah, the shy and greatly admired belle of the whole Indian encampment. Behind this wigwam René and Black Hawk have pitched their tent.

The day on which René and the Wyandot chief first met was a lucky day for both. On that day René had the good fortune, at great danger and at some hurt to himself, to rescue Wahcheeka from the claws and jaws of a wounded cinnamon bear. For four weeks René had nursed the Indian back to life and strength, and thus was established between them the bond of "blood brotherhood."

For the next five months René and Black Hawk, in company with the young Wyandot chief, roamed the forest from the Mississippi to the Scioto, from the Raisin and the Wabash to the Little Miami, visiting the tribes, making friends everywhere, and

everywhere hearing rumors of the growing power and the ceaseless activity of the Great Shawnee, Chief Tecumseh.

Carefully bestowed in his leather belt René carried a parchment of prepared coonskin. On this map were noted the waterways, the trails, the muskegs, the forests, the good camp grounds, the Indian villages found in all that country drained by the wide-reaching arms of the Ohio.

Attracted by the Prophet's dramatic acceptance of the governor's challenge, the Wyandot, with some members of his tribe, had come with René and Black Hawk to the great Piqua Council and there had the honor to camp beside the wigwam of the great Tecumseh.

Sitting before their camp fire, they talked of the great event of the morrow.

"To-morrow Tenskwatawa will cover the face of the sun?" said René to his friend.

The chief grunted acquiescence.

"Does Tecumseh believe in his brother, the prophet?"

"The Shawnee chief is a great warrior, the greatest of Indian warriors. He is a great orator, the greatest of Indian orators."

"And he believes that the Great Spirit speaks through the Prophet's voice?"

The Wyandot hesitated. "Tecumseh," he said, "tells no man his heart. He keeps the door flap down."

The day of the great contest dawned over plain and forest with a bright and cloudless sky, the early spring sun shining down in strength over river, plain, and forest. Through the hours of the forenoon new bands of Indians kept crowding into the encampment, wild men in strange garb coming from far distant tribes, fierce and shy and therefore, like the wild beasts, ready to strike if startled. By Tecumseh's orders they were warmly received, the Shawnee tribe leading in generous hospitality. Scores of tribes, the great and small, were represented, their tribal jealousies for the time obliterated. They were brothers, and blood brothers held by a common purpose and stirred by a common hope.

As midday drew on the Indian warriors, in all the gaudy splendor of new war paint, emerged from their wigwams and huts and

squatted in long lines along the edge of the forest. On the opposite side of the plain the whites began to gather—soldiers, hunters, farmers, with a sprinkling of their women folk, all in holiday attire. They had come to witness the puncturing of the inflated pride of the mad medicine man of the Shawnees who was to cover the face of the sun.

A few minutes before noonday four hundred warriors, fully armed with rifle, tomahawk, and scalp knife, silently emerged from the forest and began to move in three concentric circles about the cleared space before the Prophet's tent, their fierce yells, their wild gesticulations, their blazing eyes giving evidence of the frenzied excitement under which they labored. Before the expanding circles the boldest of the whites gave back. Indeed, uneasiness began to spread throughout the ranks of whites assembled. Women and children were hurried out of sight. Officers consulted anxiously with one another. The soldiers, rifle in hand, fell into line. The presence of four hundred armed and frenzied Indian warriors, bare to the breechcloth, painted for war, was enough to awaken grave concern in the minds of even these daring pioneers and Indian fighters.

Exactly at midday, at a given signal, all sound and movement ceased, the four hundred figures standing as if molded into bronze, soundless, motionless in their concentric circles.

Suddenly that hushed silence was pierced by a high thin cry drawn out in a long, quivering wail. Out of the very sky it came. At the cry, as if released from a single spring, four bronze figures from each point of the compass—north, east, south, and west —bounded into the center of the space immediately in front of the Prophet's tent and took their places there in four crouching armed groups, peering from hand-shaded eyes out and upward as if searching for a foe. Again came the long, thin, weird cry, more tremulous, yet penetrating to the limits of the encampment. Immediately the crouching figures laid upon the grass their weapons—rifle, tomahawk, and knife—and with palms upturned prostrated themselves upon the ground and so remained, not warriors now, but humble suppliants in the presence of the Great Spirit and His Prophet. Long silence followed. Then from within

the tent rose a sound of chanting which abruptly ended in a sharp command. Immediately two of the bronze figures sprang to the wigwam door, pulled back the flaps and waited motionless.

Out from the tent, arrayed in flowing robes of finest doeskin, painted with mystic figures and heavy with beaded work, came the Prophet, his face hideous with yellow and crimson paint, his head crowned with a headdress of horns and feathers. With slow and solemn step he strode into the enclosure and there, with head bowed down and hands folded upon his breast, did obeisance to the blazing sun. Then, lifting his face toward the sky, he cried aloud in the Shawnee tongue: "Shawan! Shawan! Shawan!"

Would Shawan hear? Would Shawan, the Guardian Spirit, which for one thousand years had presided over the destinies of his tribe, come to his aid this day? "Shawan! Shawan! Shawan! Thine aid I entreat! Hear the cry of thy little children! Speak for them to the Lord of Light, that He veil His face in darkness in this hour." A long pause. "Lord of Light! Let the darkness come! Let the darkness come!" At his first cry every warrior fell upon his knees and, placing his weapons before him, prostrated himself on the ground. From four hundred voices rose in a deep rolling tone the chant: "Let the darkness come! Let the darkness come! Let the darkness come!" Beyond the Prophet's wigwam from the groups in the shade of the pines the drums began to throb and voices to sound in unison with the chant: "Let the darkness come! Let the darkness come!" Suddenly the Prophet flung his hands high toward the heavens, and in a voice that hushed to silence chant and throbbing drum cried: "Behold, my children! The darkness comes! The darkness comes!" At that word the whole multitude rose to their feet, and lifting their eyes toward the sun, saw there upon its rim a faint shadow make its appearance.

"A cloud," muttered René to the Wyandot. "Lucky shot, eh?"

"No," said the Wyandot in an awed voice. "No cloud! Look!" True enough, this was no cloud. No cloud touched the clear blue of the heavens.

Gradually the shadow grew and deepened upon the face of the blazing sun.

"See, my children!" cried the Prophet. "The Great Spirit, the Lord of Light, covers the face of the sun!" A soft sigh like wind among pines swept over the whole assemblage. Upon their knees they swayed, crying: "The darkness has come! The darkness has come!" Steadily the shadow spread upon the face of the sun until the utmost rim was reached. The sun was blotted out. A wail of terror rose from the kneeling multitude. "Alas! The sun has gone! Alas! The sun has gone! The Lord of Light has hid His face! The Lord of Light has hid His face!" The cry became a chant. In unison with their chant the whole company of warriors rocked upon their knees, touching their foreheads to earth.

Once more the Prophet flung his hand up to the sky and cried in a loud voice: "Lord of Light, send back the sun! Lord of Light, send back the sun!" His chant was taken up on all sides by the kneeling warriors. After long waiting a faint circle of light began to appear upon the rim of the darkened sun. Immediately the drums began to throb. A chant of glad relief. "The sun returns! The sun returns!" On all sides the glad chant is taken up. The drums roll with louder throb. The warriors spring to their feet and, still preserving their concentric circles, begin to execute a solemn and rhythmic dance until once more the sun is shining down in the full blaze of his strength. At a signal from the Prophet silence fell. "Go!" he cried, his hand outstretched toward the line of white soldiers. "Go! Tell your chief Tenskwatawa covers the face of the sun."

From the warriors a shout of mad, wild triumph rose. The promise of the great Prophet was fulfilled. He had darkened the face of the sun.

The white men, soldiers and civilians, were themselves amazed beyond measure at the phenomenon, and were very gravely concerned for the effect of it upon the savages.

Four hundred armed savages bursting with racial pride, mad with religious fervor, frenzied with hate, constituted no pleasant environment for the white men. These madly dancing figures were no unskilled mob of untrained savages. They were fighting men, highly disciplined in frontier fighting. These were the warriors who had fallen upon General Harmer with his three hundred regulars and eleven hundred Kentucky riflemen and had cut

them to pieces. Warriors like these had ambushed Colonel Harden with his five hundred militia and sixty regulars of the American army and destroyed them. A single false move, the accidental discharge of a rifle, might loose upon that band of whites a destructive force with results of unspeakable horror. The officers of the militia closed their ranks and gradually fell back toward their quarters, withdrawing all whites with them from the neighborhood of the Indian encampment.

As the American officer, Captain Dey, completed the careful disposition of his men he observed two mounted Indians, with rifles held high, dash forth from their encampment toward him. In ever narrowing circles, like the Saracens of Crusader days, they drew near till within a dozen yards of him they flung their horses back upon their haunches and, leaping free of their mounts, stood in front of him.

"Ho!" cried one of them, tall, muscular, a very model of a man.

"Hello!" said the officer.

"Tenskwatawa make dark!" he said, proudly sweeping his hand toward the sun.

The officer smiled pleasantly. Denial was idle.

"Big feast to-night. Tenskwatawa say you come," holding up five fingers. "Sun so," he pointed to the horizon.

Again the officer smiled pleasantly. "You want five of us to come for supper at sundown? Say to Tenskwatawa, we come."

"Ho! Ho!" again said the warrior. "Make present! Two cow!" He pointed to two steers out upon the plain.

"Not mine," said Captain Dey, shaking his head.

"Me take um," said the Indian with a haughty gesture.

The officer shrugged his shoulder.

"Me take um," repeated the warrior, glaring, fiercely defiant.

Once more the officer shrugged his shoulder. "Not mine," he said.

"Ho! Ho!" cried the Indian in a voice of triumph, and, wreathing his hand in the mane of his horse, with a single bound he was astride and away at full speed, followed by his comrade.

With a deep curse Captain Dey turned into his quarters. He had been openly flaunted and insulted in full view of both camps.

"If I had one hundred more men, fifty more and cover, you

polecat, by the everlasting gods I'd see you eternally damned first."

Through the window he watched the two warriors dash over the plain, cut out two cattle, and begin herding them toward their camp. Two other steers that came in their way they picked up and drove all four in triumph before them.

Fifty mounted warriors rode out to meet the two, yelling their contempt of the white men and firing off their rifles, some of their bullets falling inconveniently near the white soldiers and filling them with boiling, helpless fury.

CHAPTER XIX

THE GREAT CHIEF AND THE GREAT SPIRIT

René was eager to be gone on his homeward journey. Under the spring suns the trails in this south country were breaking up, the going would be hard. His furs were already baled. In his trading he had been careful to select only the choicest of furs. There still remained of his trading pack a number of articles which he had reserved for presents.

"Help yourself, Black Hawk," he said, spreading out these articles on the ground. "Make presents to your friends."

It took Black Hawk an hour or more to make his final selection of presents, his chief difficulty lying in his choosing gifts for Lukowah.

For Wahcheeka René had chosen one of his double-barreled pistols with bullet mold, and a supply of powder, a finely tempered hunting knife, and of course tobacco.

"Where is Lukowah?" he inquired of the Chief.

Shyly, in answer to Wahcheeka's call, the Indian maiden stepped into his wigwam and stood before him.

"I want you to wear this, Lukowah," said René. He took from his pack a cloak and hood of warm thick blue broadcloth trimmed with ermine and lined with heavy red silk, a very handsome garment.

"There!" he cried putting the cloak around her shoulders. "Pull up the hood." He held up a mirror for her.

A quick rush of tears came into the eyes of the Indian girl. With a little cry of wonder and joy she fell on her knees, caught René's hand in hers, pressed it to her forehead, to her bosom, to her lips. Then, springing to her feet, she cried, "Wait!" She ran into the tent and came back carrying in her hand a girl's suit of doeskin, jacket and breeches, beautifully decorated with beads

and colored porcupine quills, an exquisite specimen of Indian work.

"For your little squaw," she said shyly.

René, deeply moved, caught her hands and drew her toward him, holding her close for some moments. "Good-bye, my sister. I shall never forget my friend."

"Good-bye," said the Indian girl. Then, pointing up to the moon rising above the tree-tops, she said, "Look, the moon and the stars see us. While the moon shines Lukowah will remember." She leaned toward him, looking into his eyes with an earnest, wistful gaze. Then, without further words she drew herself erect and slowly moved away.

"I wonder," said René to Wahcheeka, "if I might make a present to the Great Chief? I should like to give him this rifle. Would he take it, do you think?"

"Come! Come quick!" said Wahcheeka and hurried him over to Tecumseh's tent.

As they drew near they heard Tecumseh's voice sounding solemnly within the tent. At the door a young Indian stopped them.

"The Chief is speaking with the Great Spirit," he said.

"We will wait," said Wahcheeka. "He is preparing for the Great Council."

"Great Council! When? Where?"

"At Greenville, three days hence. We go to meet the Governor of this country and his council."

Tecumseh was in communion with the spirits of the red man's Pantheon, the great Shawan, the spirits of his departed ancestors, of his father, of his brothers, and above all these with the Great Spirit of all the Indian Tribes. He was using the Shawan tongue. With the common speech of the Shawnee René was more or less familiar. But the soul of the great Shawnee chief had passed far beyond the realm of common things, and in the impassioned pleading his speech took on a lofty grandeur suited to his soul's environment. Giving close attention, René was able to follow the drift of his communion. In the presence of the spirits friendly to his tribe Tecumseh was reviewing the tragic history of his people. He called to witness the Great Spirit of all the red men that

from time immemorial this land was the Indians' land. Here their forefathers had lived and hunted as free men; here lay their bones. Step by step they had been driven by white men hungry for their land. To this land they had retreated, seeking sanctuary from the aggression of the white man long years ago. Here they had planted anew their fields, here built their villages, here their children had been born. Here they desired to live in peace, doing wrong to no man. They had taken up the tomahawk only when the white man had crossed the boundary fixed by treaty and had begun to steal from them their homes. It was not the red man who sought war. The Indians desired peace, not war.

The prayer was in truth a rehearsal in the presence of the Great Spirit of all the red men and in the presence of the spirits of the great dead of the Shawnee tribe, of the speech that Tecumseh was to make in the presence of the assembled chiefs of all the tribes and of the great chiefs of the white men three days hence at the Council of Greenville.

An hour passed, a second hour, and still the great rehearsal went on, iterated and reiterated. René listened with a burning heart. Never had the story of the Indian wrongs been so powerfully placed before his mind. At length the voice sank to silence. The young Indian guard signalled to Wahcheeka to enter.

"Great Chief," said Wahcheeka, standing at the door, "you have asked for rifles. Here is one at least." He motioned René forward.

"Yes, here is one," said René impulsively. "I wish I could offer you ten thousand."

Tecumseh started, turned his rapt gaze upon the young man proffering him a rifle.

"An omen!" he said in an awed voice. "An omen!" He caught the rifle from René's hand. "Your rifle?"

"Yours now, Great Chief, if you will have it," replied René.

The chief weighed the beautiful weapon in his hand, patted it with a fond smile, and sighted it through the door.

"Good!" he said in a deep guttural, speaking more to himself than to René. "Death to the enemies of my children!" Leaning upon the rifle he gazed out into the moonlight. He had forgotten René. This rifle was a gift from his guardian angel. To the Indian

mind this was a good omen. His face was lighted with a new hope and confidence.

René turned away and was departing to his tent when the voice of Tecumseh recalled him.

"Why do you give me this? Is this from your great chief?"

"No," said René. "It is a gift from one who would serve you. To-morrow I return to my home."

His piercing eyes softened. "Wait," he said and turned back into the wigwam. "Take this from one who is glad to have you for a friend," offering a beautifully cut red stone pipe. "Some day, perhaps, only the Great Spirit knows, some day Tecumseh may come to your chief offering friendship." With beautiful grace he gave his hand to the young man in farewell. "The future is veiled before my eyes," he said, "but a voice speaks here"—touching his breast—"saying we shall meet again. Farewell. No! You will come to Greenville. To the Great Council. You will hear Tecumseh open his heart. You will tell your great chief. You will come?" His voice was earnest, commanding, pleading.

"Yes, I will come. My eyes will be open. I will carry Tecumseh's words to my great chief."

"It is good." The chief waved his hand, dismissing his visitors.

CHAPTER XX

THE GREAT COUNCIL

THREE days later eight hundred warriors with the whole Indian encampment at Piqua marched to the Great Council at Greenville. They were all picked men and armed with rifles. Their order of advance was after the best tactics of Indian warfare. Far in the van on either flank and in the rear scouts like shadows flitted through the forest.

Upon arrival at Greenville they found a camp ground selected for them upon an open plain near the town. This Tecumseh promptly rejected. He preferred to select himself the site for his encampment. With the eye of a strategist he chose his camp ground with a view to easy defense.

The Governor requested that the conference be held in the Council Chamber within the town. Again Tecumseh promptly rejected the proposition. The council would be held in the open. "The Indians are at home on the bosom of their mother earth," was his reply. "Here we sit at ease. Here let our council be held."

The Governor requested that at the council the Indians should be represented by a selected number of chiefs.

"No," said Tecumseh, "we have no secrets from our people. We are all brethren, and we speak with open lips to open ears." A wise word, truly. In Tecumseh's mind the main purpose of the conference with the Governor and his officials was to furnish the assembled chiefs and their warriors an opportunity to hear his great exposition of the basis upon which the new confederacy of Indians was established and the conditions which that confederacy would demand from the representatives of the Long Knives.

The Governor opened the conference by briefly asking of Tecumseh and his chiefs three main questions. First, by what right were the Indians gathered in such large numbers upon land not their own, upon land which had been conceded by treaty

to the white man? Second, why did they come armed to this conference which was a gathering for peaceful consultation? Third, why was the treaty which the government had made between the Indian and the white man so soon broken by Tecumseh?

With great deliberation Tecumseh began his famous speech, which, translated by an Indian trader, lasted for three hours and which stands at the head of Indian oratory of all time. [He delivered his speech as he had prepared it in those hours of meditation and prayer three nights before at Piqua.] He began by briefly answering the Governor's three questions. The answers were easy to find. The Indians were settled upon the land which was theirs from time immemorial by the gift of the Great Spirit, Lord of the red and white man alike. The Indians were armed because by their arms alone could they live and by their arms unfortunately they had to defend their rights. As to the treaties, the Indians never had been the first to break treaties. The Treaty of Greenville he repudiated in the name of the Great Confederacy of Indians with scornful indignation. The Treaty was no true treaty. It was signed only by a few chiefs. He himself had never signed the Treaty. He never would have signed it. Treaties must be made with the Confederacy. With great skill he anticipated and answered the Governor's objections to this statement. He knew that the Governor would say that there was no confederacy. The answer to that was that the chiefs assembled before him, representing more than thirty tribes, were all bound by the oath agreed upon in solemn conclave to one another and to himself, their chosen chief, and that the covenant was preserved by the Wyandot tribe, the keepers of the Great Wampum Belt for all the Indians.

If the Governor objected that these were separate tribes because they spoke different languages and had different chiefs, his reply was that the same objection could be made to the Council of the Seventeen Fires. In that Council of the Seventeen Fires there were seventeen different governors, and from the first very grave differences existed among the white men. He now served notice upon the Governor that henceforth no single chief, the chiefs of no one tribe, had any longer a right to barter away land that formed the hunting ground common to all Indians.

Having disposed of the questions of the Governor, Tecumseh proceeded to elaborate the purpose of the Indian Confederacy, the basis upon which it was formed, the laws which should govern it, and the Indian policy which it represented.

Tecumseh then in masterly style gave a succinct history of the relations which had existed between the two races during the last half century. In a series of dramatic pictures he described the wars consequent upon the breaking of these treaties, the killing of Indians, the burning of their villages, the destruction of their corn fields by expeditions of the white soldiers. With equal truth and vividness he pictured the savage massacres of whites by the Indians, the destruction of the settlers' homes, the slaughtering of their women and children. He frankly acknowledged the savage fury of his people in war, but he protested that his people were not like the white people. They were untutored, uncultured. It was their nature to be savage. They made no pretense to anything else. The Great White Father across the Big Water in the early days had drawn a line of boundary at the Alleghanies but the white settlers did not obey their Great Father. Again and again the lines drawn were ignored, the greed of the white man was insatiable.

The orator then dealt with recent history: in vivid and lurid colors pictured the massacres at Point Pleasant under Lewis and Rogers Clark. There his own father Pukeshinwau had been killed. A treaty was made to end the war, but four years later General Clark raided all the Indian posts up to the Wabash. Again peace was made, but two years later General Clark raided the old villages of the Shawnees, their home for hundreds of years, old Chillicothe and Piqua. In heart-moving words Tecumseh told the story of that massacre which he as a boy of twelve years had witnessed and from which he was saved by his sister. In truly noble and exalted language he described the funeral rites of the dead Indians lying round their ravaged village.

The slaughter, however, had not been all on one side. With a savage triumph he described the fight with General Harmer at Pine Creek, commanding three hundred troops of the Thirteen Fires and eleven hundred Kentucky riflemen. With dramatic power he set forth the strategy of the Indians in drawing the

white soldiers into an ambuscade, and with flashing tomahawk, to the accompaniment of blood-curdling war whoops, he demonstrated the slaughter of the whole army of the whites with the exception of a handful of wounded and terrified soldiers. Once more, under Colonel Hardin, nearly six hundred white soldiers invaded the Indian country. Once again they were ambushed and pitilessly slain. The following year Generals St. Clair and Butler with a great army penetrated the Indian country as far as the upper waters of the Wabash. That army was cut to pieces, General Butler and his officers slain, General St. Clair by a mere accident escaping destruction.

"You have asked why the Indians are here to-day at Greenville. We are here because the Great Spirit, Lord of all lands gave these lands to our fathers a thousand years ago. Can you here declare in the presence of whites and Indians alike that the Great Spirit gave you any claim to this land? You are not only robbers of the Indians' land, you are defying and insulting the Great Spirit Himself. The Indians to-day are only obeying the commands of the Great Spirit in fighting for their rights to this land, in defending their homes, their women and children. Can you and your soldiers make successful war upon the Great Spirit?"

He closed his oration with a solemn declaration and vow that he and all the Indians that he represented that day would defend this land to the last man. If they were driven to desperation by the advance of the white people into Indian country, they would send their women and children far beyond the great Father of Waters, and they would fight until the last Indian was slain. He offered them that day peace or war. Peace the Indians wanted, war they hated, but if the whites chose war, war he would give them.

Turning swiftly to the assembled chiefs and Indians at his back, in a loud, ringing voice he asked them to show there and then whether they agreed with him in this ultimatum. In response the chiefs and their eight hundred warriors sprang to their feet and with tomahawks held high, rent the very sky with one savage yell of defiance.

The Governor, his suite, the soldiers at their back, with one

accord sprang to their feet as if expecting doom. Tecumseh surveyed them with an ironic smile, turned to his warriors and waved his hand. Instantly they sank to earth with the silence of death upon them.

"You have seen," said the Chief of the Confederacy to the Governor, "you have heard. Tecumseh has spoken."

As the Great Chief resumed his seat the Governor sat for some moments, speechless, motionless. The indictment of the white race, the appeal of the Indian orator for justice and for peace, the defiance in that heart-shaking Indian war whoop left the white man speechless, paralyzed.

After a long silence the Governor rose and stated that to-morrow he would make answer.

Immediately Tecumseh arose, gave an order to his chiefs. There was no falling into regular lines as with white soldiers, no marching off by sections and companies. At a signal the Indian warriors silently, swiftly, melted into the forest behind them, and before the white troops were ready to move, the last of the painted warriors had become fused with the forest.

CHAPTER XXI

THE END OF THE TRADING

THE accounts were cast up. The trading was over. At one side a pile of furs, rare, beautiful, costly, represented the return from Mr. Hamilton's merchandise. Beside these furs a pile of skins, buckskins and doeskins beautifully tanned as only the Indians can tan, some of them beaded and quilled.

The story of the trip had been told in barest outline, for René was reticent in matters personal, and Black Hawk was silent throughout except for grunts of assent. At René's side was his share of the furs and skins for personal presents. At Black Hawk's side, a similar pile of merchandise for friends, with a special pipe for John Brant, son of the old Chief of the Mohawks, Joseph Brant.

"You ought to have more than four hundred dollars, René," said Mr. Hamilton. "You ought to have at least half as much again."

But René was sensitive upon that point. He knew that he had not sold the merchandise to the Indians at such high rates of profit as were usually received and that consequently the returns to the merchant were not as great as they otherwise would have been. Hence he would take no more than bare wages. For Black Hawk there were the ordinary wages of the trip with a douceur of fifty dollars in kind, as René had stipulated, and with extra presents for his friends.

"You're a trader, young man," said Mr. Hamilton to René as he turned over the pile of beautiful fox furs, silver, black, and red. "You know furs, and I think you know how to trade. Now, what next? You'll be resting up for a while. Y're lookin' gey thin and peakit, laddie."

"Feel that," said René, holding out an arm to him.

"Aye," said Mr. Hamilton. "It might be all bane for the feel of it. Y're all richt, I ween, but all the same, y're peakit."

"Where is the commander-in-chief?" inquired René.

"He's recently come to Montreal. Ye'll be for seein' him."

"Yes," replied René, "after I see my uncle and some people."

"Your uncle has been quite anxious about you, René, although he would never let on. Ye'll be seein' the people at the Manor House, I doubt."

"Yes," said René quietly. "I think I shall call upon the colonel."

"It's a quiet house now. Only Edward at home, and the old colonel is deeply incensed at Hubert."

"What's the matter with Hubert?"

"Hubert seems to have become almost Americanized. He has been writing a series of letters in the *Guardian* which have stirred up great wrath among some people in this country. To me there is nothing much wrong with them—a little one-sided. I have the papers, and I shall let you have them."

René rose to go.

"Won't you stay and have dinner with us? Mrs. Hamilton would be delighted to have you."

René fully appreciated the honor offered him. An invitation to dinner at Mr. Robert Hamilton's mansion indicated a certain social status.

"No," he said, "I have to see these people before I go to Montreal."

"To Montreal? When do you leave?"

"The day after to-morrow morning."

"The day after to-morrow, man! You must give yourself a few days' rest. For in spite of all the iron and steel in your frame you look to me worn out."

"I'm fit enough," said René. "I shall leave the day after to-morrow. How are the trails?"

"The trails are bad. It's a late spring, and the ice is not gone, especially in the bush trails, and the going will be heavy."

"I was thinking I might take Gyp, but if the bottom is gone from the roads possibly I can pick my way better on foot."

"But to Montreal, man? Do you know how far that is? Three

hundred miles if you go on foot, and, after all, that is the best mode of travel these days. That will take you ten days' hard going."

"Ten days with no packs?" said René. "With luck we ought to make it in seven, at most."

"You are not going alone?"

"No, Black Hawk is coming with me." Black Hawk looked up quickly. "You're ready, aren't you, Black Hawk?"

Black Hawk grunted assent.

As Mr. Hamilton bade him good-bye he said to René, shaking him warmly by the hand, "You have made good in your first venture. Do you want a job? If you do I have one to offer you, and a job that will be worth while."

"No," said René, "I want no job. I'm going to school."

"Wise man," said Mr. Hamilton. "Dr. Stuart has a fine school in York."

"I was thinking of that," said René.

It was a busy day for both René and Black Hawk. Black Hawk was sent out to his people laden with presents. René's first visit was to his uncle, whose delight at seeing his nephew was the more acute that it had to be concealed. René gazed round upon the little house with new eyes. It was neat enough but was in need of certain furnishing for its comfort. A cook stove, a lamp, a mattress, and bedding. These he resolved Mr. Hamilton should send tomorrow. There was little talk between him and his uncle. But the sergeant major had undoubtedly made up his mind that for René the days of boyhood had forever passed. Henceforth he and his nephew, for all his youth in years, must meet as man to man.

René spent the evening perusing Hubert's letters from Boston. They puzzled and disturbed him. They presented a new side of American political life. He was puzzled about the American point of view and the controversy between Great Britain and the United States. He resolved to get Hector MacCrimmon's mind on this. Next day he found the old doctor in his garden, raking, cleaning, burning. The frost was still in the ground, but the warm sun, with eternal optimism, was pouring new life upon dead

roots. The old man's appearance was like his garden. Winter, and yet with some sun pouring life into it.

"You are looking fine Dr. MacCrimmon," he said after the greetings were over.

"Is he not?" said his sister.

"What has come to you?" said René. "You have knocked years off your life."

The old doctor smiled quietly. "It is just the sunlight. Sunlight and sunlight, just that."

"It is that Billy Badger that has done it," replied his sister. "He is the lad."

"But what has Billy Badger to do with it?" inquired René.

"Billy Badger and the Methodists and the meetings, it is," said Elspeth.

"The Methodists!" exclaimed René in a shocked voice.

What had Hector MacCrimmon, that staid old Presbyterian, to do with the Methodists, and what could the Methodists do for him?

"I will not be saying a word against the Methodists, for all their wild ways and queer doings," said Elspeth.

"You have had a hard trip, René," said Dr. MacCrimmon, "and it has left its mark upon you. Do you not see it, Elspeth?"

"Indeed, and it is the first thing I will be seeing on him. It is that he is a lad no longer," replied Elspeth, her keen eyes upon the young man's face.

"You have the word, Elspeth. He is indeed a lad no longer. Now, then, tell us of your journey and your experiences with those wild Indians of the South."

And René told him. But there was not much of his own doings. The heart and passion of the story was the tale of the Great Chief of the Confederacy, of his struggle to save his people and the tremendous odds against him, of his chances of winning out.

Dr. MacCrimmon listened with understanding and sympathy. When René was done with his tale he sat pondering the matter silently for some time.

"That Chief Tecumseh," he said at length, "has a hard task, I do not doubt. In the old days of Britain we cannot forget that it took over four hundred years for the heptarchy to become one

government. And it is but a few years since the United States itself was divided into many governments with conflicting ideals and conflicting notions of government. It took a war and a dozen years of political struggle to achieve even a semblance of unity, and for that matter they are hardly one people yet, nor will be for some time."

He spent a happy two hours with the MacCrimmons, listening to the doctor's wise talk upon the political situation at home and abroad, chatting and chaffing with Miss Elspeth, who shyly mothered him, inquiring as to his outfitting.

"What socks have you, lad?"

"Splendid new ones from Mr. Hamilton. A whole new outfit."

"Ay," she grumbled, "I am not thinking much of those store-bought things. There's neither comfort nor wear in them. But you are not independent."

"Not a bit, Miss Elspeth. I only wish you would knit me a pair of socks."

"Man, are you meaning it? That I will, then. A half dozen of them and a muffler, to boot."

"Now I must go. But first we will have 'The MacKintosh Lament.'"

"'The MacKintosh'? You will not be going with that terrible wail in your ears?"

"Woman, whisht! And what finer and grander music could he be carrying with him than 'The MacKintosh'?" said her brother indignantly.

And with "The MacKintosh" in his ears and a shy soft touch of Miss Elspeth's lips on his and a deep warm glow in his heart he set off for his next call.

He shrank from his visit to the Brookes Manor House. He was a boy no longer. How would they receive him? How should he regard them? Really, the question was, what of Charlotte?

He rode Gyp in her fine new saddle and bridle. From the saddlebags he took a small parcel containing the silver fox pelt and the beaded doeskin dress. Mrs. Brookes received him with all kindness. She was as warm as ever in her welcome. She was eager to hear the details of his trip, anxiously sympathetic as to his worn appearance, and interested in his future plans.

She regretted that the colonel and Edward were both away from home. She made but brief reference to Hubert and without any mention of his correspondence in the *Guardian,* but René caught in this reference a note of anxiety as she spoke of her absent son.

Then frankly and freely she told of Charlotte, her goings and doings. Charlotte was in a famous English school where she had the opportunity of meeting with the daughters of the best English families. There were letters from Charlotte describing in glowing words her visit to London, her rides in the Row in her new habit, the festivities of the great metropolis, in which she had a share, the balls, the theaters, the routs, till René felt as if his still face would crack like parchment under his attempt to smile.

Charlotte had had an invitation for a tour through Europe, but the war made that doubtful. England was a lovely country, full of charming people, rich in historical ruins and grand cathedrals and lovely homes, and so forth, and so on, till René was sick at heart with it all.

He made a pretense of profound interest, asking many questions, eagerly followed descriptions of the doings and sayings of great people in her letters. He was glad, more than glad that Charlotte was having such a fine time.

"But the dear girl does not forget us," said Mrs. Brookes. "Listen," and from a letter she quoted, " 'But, my dear mother, after all there is no country like Canada and no people like my own people, and often I think of the days Nell and I had at the nutting. Do you remember that day when—um-um-um.' " There was a sudden arrest of the quotation. "She is a dear girl, and I am glad she is so happy."

René expressed equal joy.

"Here is her picture," said Charlotte's mother, handing René a miniature. "It shows her at a school masquerade dressed as a grand lady with hair piled high and powdered."

It was the picture of a lovely face, with all the old defiance, the old witchery, the old piquant charm, and yet with a touch of wistful sadness in it. That touch smote René to the heart. His blurred eyes could see nothing as he held the picture long

in his fingers, which it took his full power of will to keep from trembling. It was Charlotte, the old Charlotte, his Charlotte, in spite of all her grand dress, Charlotte as he had seen her first that fateful day under the beech trees in the forest. He could not trust himself to utter a word. He knew he could not control the tremor in his voice. Desperately he rose.

"I must be going, Mrs. Brookes," he said, his voice the deep voice of a man. "I have a good deal to attend to. You will remember me to Edward and to the colonel." Close to him on the floor lay his little bundle containing the silver fox skin and the beaded doeskin dress. What would Charlotte care for these things now? For Canada and this wild Canadian life these things might be suitable, but for England and all her fine surroundings—— He laughed aloud at his folly.

No! He could not remain for tea. He had pressing business to which he must give immediate attention. Hurriedly he made his adieu, stuffed his parcel into the saddlebag, mounted Gyp, and rode down the avenue as if the devil were hunting him, cursing himself for his uncontrollable heart. Who was he to cherish the memory of this girl? A whole world lay between them. He was glad Mrs. Brookes had shown him that miniature. Nothing she could have done would have so effectively revealed his folly. Now all that folly was done with. As for him, thank God he had other things to think about. His country and its threatening dangers, the great epic of Tecumseh's adventure, his schooling. But ever as he galloped along the slushy river road there was before his eyes the picture of a girl with a lovely face framed with hair piled high and powdered and with the touch of wistful sadness. It was that touch of wistful sadness that had made his eyes blur in her mother's living room, and now it was the memory of that wistful sadness that blurred his eyes as he rode along.

He took the north road toward his uncle's home. In the far distance he saw another rider approaching him. Drawing nearer, he recognized the rider as Hope Radcliffe. Hector MacCrimmon's words came back to him. "He has a sore heart just now. What the lad needs is a little healing for his heart." The old doctor had doubtless referred to Hope. It was Hope that had hurt his friend's heart. Were it not for the very shame of it, he would

have galloped past her with a curse in his heart for all girls. But he could not pass her. She was, after all, a very true friend, and the friend who had been kindest of all the friends he had in the settlement.

Hope hailed him with a loud glad cry. "Oh, René! Is it you? Oh! I am so glad to see you!" Her blue eyes were shining, her lovely face aglow. She stretched out her strong hand, caught his, and held it. "I cannot tell how good it is to see you," she said. His heart warmed to her. Hope was all right. She would wilfully hurt no one. She turned and rode with him. She was just out for a canter. She had no special business in the village. She had so much to ask him. Oh, she was glad to see him. After the first glow had faded René thought he read in her face too the signs of a sore heart.

Slowly they rode together to the entrance of the lane of her father's house, René telling her his tale and Hope hers as they rode, but no word either of Hubert or of Charlotte in either tale. René would not go in with Hope, so Hope must turn right back with him to the main entrance road, with still never a word of the things most alive with them, till René, maddened by the ache in his heart and by pity for the marks of a sore heart in her face, broke the silence.

"I have read Hubert's letters. Hector MacCrimmon said to me 'the lad has a sore heart!' What did he mean, Hope?" There was a note almost of sternness in his voice.

"Oh! René, you too are blaming me," cried the girl in a piteous voice. "His mother blames me, but indeed, indeed I meant no harm. What could I have done? What can a girl do? And now, for all these months, never a word of him, not a word from a living soul. His mother will hardly speak to me. Edward too is silent. He—poor boy—oh, René! you must not be hard on me. There is no one left now to whom I can speak."

This and much more came pouring forth incoherent, and turgid with grief and passion, like a dammed mountain stream suddenly bursting its barrier.

René listened in silent, heart-stricken sorrow, and all the more that he could only guess the cause of her grief. Her reference to Edward he could not understand. Something had come between

her and Hubert. Nothing more was known to him. The sight of the girl utterly unnerved and swept by grief and passion robbed him of his wonted self-control.

"Hope, I am dreadfully sorry. I am all in the dark. I am asking only this: Can I help you, and how?"

"They are all blaming him," continued Hope, "blaming him bitterly—all his old friends. His father is terrible. Edward and his mother say nothing, but they don't understand, and they don't approve his letters. My father, of course, is strong for him, and a great many of Father's ways of thinking, but that only makes it worse. For the last few weeks there is a strong feeling growing up in this country against the colonists from the other side. Loyalists especially, and all that lot, are down on us—I mean on Father and the American settlers who came later. It is all so hard, so hard! And Hubert is so very pronounced in his opinions. I know by what he writes, reading between the lines, just how bitter he is and how hard he has become. It is not good for him to be that way. And, René, I am afraid—oh, I am afraid he is not behaving very well. He is going with a wild lot, and, oh! oh! oh!" Her voice broke in wild sobbing.

René caught her bridle rein and held up her horse. "Get down, Hope," he ordered slipping from his saddle. "Now, tell me just who has said that Hubert is going wild?"

It took some questioning, but finally he drew from her that her authority was Marcle.

"Marcle!" exclaimed René. "Is that all? Come, get on your horse. I am not worrying any more. Marcle! Hope, I don't trust him. I never liked him, but now I trust him less than ever. Listen to me. He is no Canadian. He is with our enemies. I don't want to be hard, Hope. All Americans are not our enemies. The best Americans are our friends and are opposed to this foolish war that is threatening. But Marcle is not one of them. I don't believe for one minute that Hubert is going wild. Not he! His blood and his breeding are against such a possibility. Put it away from you. Hubert is as sound as a bell, clear as the sun."

At his words Hope again burst into wild sobbing, but this time her tears came from a heart relieved of an unbearable burden.

"Oh, René you are good to me. I am going to believe you. Oh! I feel so much happier now."

But René was not finished with her.

"Hope," he said and his voice was deep as a man's, "Hubert's heart is sore. A sore heart is a hard thing to bear. Cannot you help him?"

"How can I help him? Tell me how I can help him."

"Have you written to him?"

"I did write. I wrote the very week that he left."

"But not since then?"

"No."

"Then your letter did him little good. How could it? When he received it he was still unable to think clearly. He was raging mad about something you did or said or didn't do or didn't say. I don't know what it was, but I do know that a fellow in that mood is pretty well off his head. I know. Oh! I know! He is mad crazy. He sends people to hell, even those he loves. Write him again. Five months have passed. Tell me this, Hope, if Hubert knew the truth and all the truth, would it help to heal the hurt in his heart?"

Hope rode along in silence. Then with a shy look she said, "René, I think perhaps it might."

"Then, for heaven's sake," said René, "write to-night—write to-night."

"Oh, I wish I could tell you all, René," she said. "I cannot, it is not my secret. But, René, whatever happens, you are a dear, dear boy. No, you're not a boy, René. You've grown far older than I am in these months. You are a man, and somehow I feel stronger to go on since you have spoken to me."

"That's all right," said René. "I am with you."

Once more they were at her lane. René dismounted to open the gate. Hope slipped from her saddle and stood beside him.

"Good-bye, Hope," said René. "I must get away. Write that letter."

"René," she said softly, looking up into his eyes, "let me kiss you. I want to kiss you. You are the very, very best friend I have in all the world." She put her arms around his neck, drew his head down, and kissed him upon the lips.

René's face was hot. Only one other had he kissed in all his life. On Hope's face there was no flush, only a tremulous joy. As he rode away René smiled grimly to himself. Hope's trouble was after all a simple thing, and the hurt to the heart of the "lad Hubert" was such as might easily be healed.

CHAPTER XXII

TO MONTREAL

Before break of day René and Black Hawk, in their buckskins and moccasins, were off on their three-hundred-and-fifty-mile jaunt to Montreal, the temporary abode of the commander-in-chief. On the sixth succeeding day, early in the morning they passed underneath the ruined archway leading to the famous old Château de Ramezay, the headquarters of the commander-in-chief of the forces in Canada.

To the left of the great entrance hall of the Château de Ramezay a door opened upon what had been in the great old days an office or waiting room. This had become the orderly room for headquarters. Here in a huge stone fireplace manteled in black oak glowed a fire of logs, for the morning air was still raw with winds from the frozen St. Lawrence.

On the side opposite the fireplace was a door leading to the private rooms of the commander-in-chief. Three young officers, Lieutenants Selby, Robinson, and Adjutant Thompson, sat about a table whose carved oak legs belied its present battered appearance and spoke of days of former grandeur. The officers were busy over files of papers. The adjutant's face was clouded with wrath. "Here is a piece of the most infernal, the most damnable insolence. I expect the chief will have something to say about this. What a lot of swine they are."

"What's the matter now, Thompson?"

"Just listen to this, will you," and Thompson read, "'No funds for this purpose.' This is from the secretary, you understand, of the Executive Council. Some time ago the chief wrote in most joyous terms that offers had come from a number of French-Canadian gentlemen to raise corps of cavalry, artillery, and infantry at their own expense, and as a matter of fact this work has gone on in a most enthusiastic manner. The condition

attached was that the government should supply arms and equipment and should pay troops when in camp. Listen to this damnable minute: 'No funds for this purpose are at the disposal of the civil government, but have invariably been provided by the commander-in-chief of the forces. The Canadian government is not by law authorized to provide the furnishing of carts or horses for works as proposed.' "

"What is it all about?"

"Selby, you are an ignorant ass. Surely you know from the correspondence that we have been carrying on here for the last three months that the chief is wearing out body and soul in the effort to kindle the patriotic enthusiasm of the people in this province and to enroll them in the militia forces. By his own personal influence he has secured a response, as I have just informed you, and now this council has the infernal insolence to suggest that the chief find money for arms, equipment, and pay. Do you know that at this present minute there are no more than three hundred militia trained in the use of arms in both Upper and Lower Canada? Three hundred, and the Yankees across the line laying their plans to walk in and eat us up."

"Oh, rubbish!" replied Selby. "All that war talk is poppycock."

"Of course you know," replied Thompson scornfully. "You have doubtless received secret dispatches from His Excellency President Jefferson."

"No, but I have a friend in New York who writes me that the whole country, with the exception of a few rabid Democrats and long-rifle frontiersmen down in Kentucky, are dead opposed to this war."

"Selby's right," said Robinson. "All the sound people in America are against this war, and as a matter of fact are deadly opposed to President Jefferson and his fool 'embargo.' Not that I have anything against the embargo, for it has certainly been a good thing for the Canadas. But as a matter of law the Executive Council is quite right in its decision. There is no law authorizing the government to meet the expenditure."

"Then why in the name of high heaven isn't there a law? And as to this war being poppycock, Selby, I repeat, you're an ass. If I had my way——" At this moment there was a tap at the door.

"Come in," yelled Thompson in a wrathful voice. The door opened, and what appeared to be two Indians stepped within the room. A second look, however, revealed to the adjutant that one, though black as an Indian, was a white man. Both were clothed in buckskins considerably the worse for wear, both had their worn faces burned black by the sun and the bitter March winds.

"Hello!" said the adjutant. "What do you want?"

"I wish to see the commander-in-chief," said the white man.

"And what's your name?"

"René LaFlamme."

"Well, you can't see him. Have you an appointment with him?"

"No."

"What's your business?"

"My business is private," replied René, his eyes resting quietly upon the wrathful face of the adjutant.

"Private, eh! Well, look here, young man, we don't allow people with private business to break in upon the commander-in-chief of the forces in this sort of way. You write me a letter stating your private business. I'll see that the commander-in-chief gets it, and if he wants to make an appointment with you leave your address or come back here to-morrow and I will let you know."

"But I must see him at once," replied René quietly.

"Oh, you must, eh? And do you think that I can allow any Tom, Dick, or Harry with their Indian relations to break in upon the working hours of the commander-in-chief?"

"No," replied René, with a quiet smile, "but you see I am neither Tom, Dick, nor Harry. I wish to see the commander-in-chief on important business, and I have an idea he wants to see me."

"Oh, wants to see you? Well, look here, young fellow, I'm sorry, the commander-in-chief will have to curb his impatience this morning. It may be as you say, it may be that he is pining with anxiety to see you and your aboriginal friend. Write me your business. Then come to-morrow and you shall get an answer."

"No," replied René. "My business will not wait till to-morrow. I have come three hundred and fifty miles since last Wednesday morning to see him."

"Three hundred and fifty miles in six days. Where from?"

"I have come from York, from Niagara, indeed. Left there six days ago."

"Come, young man, draw it a little milder. Our posts take ten days."

"I have an important matter to submit to the commander-in-chief. I want to see him this morning, and I intend to see him."

The adjutant rose from his chair and moved toward the speaker. "Young man, I have told you what you must do. The commander-in-chief is behind that door," he said, "but no man sees him except by appointment. Tell me your business, and if I consider it proper I shall speak to the commander-in-chief."

"The commander-in-chief is in there?" inquired René.

"Yes, he is."

René stepped toward the closed door.

"No, you don't young man," said the adjutant, stepping quickly between René and the door. The other officers rose to their feet.

"Better speak to the chief, Thompson," suggested Selby. "The young man's business may be important."

"I think I know my business," replied Thompson stiffly. "This fellow tells me what his business is or out he goes." He moved toward René and caught him by the arm. René's hand rested lightly upon the adjutant's breast. His flexed arm suddenly straightened out. Thompson was hurled backward toward the table, stumbled over his chair, and landed with a crash upon the floor. René stepped quietly to the door and knocked upon it. The two others sprang toward the door to intercept the young man standing quietly there waiting an answer to his knock. The door opened. The officers immediately sprang to attention. Thompson scrambled to his feet. The chief's eyes swept the room.

"What is this, Mr. Thompson? Who are these people?"

"This young fellow, sir, insists upon seeing you without an appointment, without explaining the nature of his business."

"And you permit that?" flashed the chief. "You know your duty. Why is this young man not under arrest? What is your business, young man?" inquired the chief, turning fiercely upon René.

"I wish to present my report, sir."

The commander-in-chief looked at him keenly. "Great heavens! You are—yes, you are LaFlamme!"

"Yes, sir," replied René.

"Come in."

René stepped to the door, followed by Black Hawk. Again the adjutant interposed. "You stay out here," he said.

René paused at the door, turned to the chief, and said, "It would be good if Black Hawk were allowed to come in too."

"Let him in," said the chief and shut the door. After a bare word of greeting Brock said, "You have a report. You have been—" he paused a few moments—"five months away."

René took his map and papers from his pocket. He spread the map upon the table, laid his papers beside it. "This is the map of the country through which we have traveled, and these papers are information in regard to waterways, trails, forests, swamps, camping grounds, and that sort of thing, also concerning the Indian tribes, their numbers, locations, and the like."

"Sit down," said the chief brusquely. His face was lined deep, thin and worn as if with anxiety. He was obviously overwhelmed with business and in no mood for mere conversation. He took the map, glanced at it, rang a bell at his side.

"Let me have the map of the western American frontier south from Lake Erie," he asked of the adjutant.

In a few moments the adjutant returned and laid several maps upon the table. The general laid a measuring scale upon René's map.

"My map is not drawn to scale, sir," he said. "I am not skilled at map drawing, nor did I have the instruments. The relative distances I guessed at by walking. The distances by trail are very uncertain."

The general ran his eye over the lines which indicated René's course. His questions came short and sharp.

"Is Fort Wayne not on the Wabash?"

"No, sir, it is on a branch of the Maumee."

"The Maumee enters into the Raisin?"

"No, sir, the Maumee flows directly into the southwestern end of Lake Erie."

"Greenville is the headquarters of Tecumseh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why is this?"

"It is very near to Piqua—that is, the new Piqua, which was founded after the destruction of the original Piqua, which was burned in a raid of the Americans under General Rogers Clark nearly thirty years ago."

"Greenville is American territory?"

"It is in the territory claimed by the Americans after the Treaty of Greenville, some thirteen years ago."

"Why, then, does Tecumseh make that his headquarters?"

"Tecumseh denies the validity of the Greenville Treaty on the ground that it was not signed by all the chiefs and that seeing it is common hunting ground for all the tribes it cannot be surrendered except by the signatures of chiefs representing all tribes. But I understand Tecumseh is preparing to abandon Greenville and the Ohio country. He is offered a site for a new town by the Pottawatomies at Tippecanoe, at the junction of the Wabash and Tippecanoe rivers. This will mean that the Indians will lose some millions of acres of the finest hunting land and of the finest agricultural land in the United States."

"And they expect peace," muttered the general *sotto voce.*

The general's attention centered around two pivotal points.

"Tell me this about Tecumseh," he said. "Begin with your first sight of him and give me every detail that you can remember. I must know the man. Details are important."

"It is not easy to estimate him," replied René. "He is a great man, a great leader, a great orator, and—" René paused—"a great gentleman." Briefly, dramatically, with voice thrilling with emotion, René described the great chief of the confederacy, his passionate love for his people, his struggle for their existence, his power of oratory, his qualities of leadership. As he proceeded with his sketch of the Shawnee chief his enthusiasm mounted. Unconsciously he found himself quoting words and phrases from Tecumseh's great speech at Greenville.

"Splendid! Splendid!" said Brock. "He must be, as you say, a truly great man and a great orator. You believe him to be thoroughly sincere?"

"He lives for his people!" replied René earnestly.

"What of his attitude toward the British?" inquired the general.

"Nothing shows his perfect sincerity and straightforwardness as does his attitude toward the Americans and the British. In his dealings with the Americans he seeks and offers an alliance in return for a firm treaty which will put an end to American encroachments upon Indian territory. Tecumseh seeks not only peace but alliance with the Americans. Failing a treaty with the Americans he will turn to the British, but he is not bargaining one against the other. His first desire is for an alliance with the Americans. He made this quite plain, but if the Americans grant him no guarantee of peace, then he will turn to the British."

"Perfectly correct. Perfectly correct," said the general. "Nothing could be fairer."

In regard to another point, the general was deeply concerned. "What is the attitude of the Western American people toward the question of war, of the military officials, say, and the governors of Ohio and Indiana?"

"The officers that I met were suspicious of the neutrality of Canada and of Great Britain in regard to the Indians. The Western Americans hate the Indians. A bloody war has been carried on between the frontiersmen and the Indians for more than thirty years. They dread an alliance between the Indians and the British. They would welcome a war, however, which would give them the conquest of Canada. They are convinced that there would be little resistance by Canada and that, as far as Canada is concerned, the war would be a walk-over."

"Ah!" exclaimed the general. "They are not much mistaken as far as some of our Canadian citizens are concerned, I fear. Very many of our American settlers would sympathize with the invader and, I fear, make common cause with him. On the other hand, I believe that large numbers of Americans are opposed to war. The Federalists minimize the war sentiment and overemphasize the numbers and influence of those who are opposed to war. So do many of our people. For instance, young Brookes. Have you seen his letters to the Niagara *Guardian?* Silly vaporings, verging on the disloyal. They are a discredit to the young man and grief to his family."

"That may be," said René quickly. "It is quite true, as he says, that of two thousand arrests of alleged deserters protested by the American Minister at London only some five per cent. could be proved to be British subjects and many were conclusively proved to be American citizens."

"Never mind, we must grant that there are two sides to this question and our naval officers are rather brusque at times in their enforcing of the Right of Search. The Nelson touch, you know. This arresting of American citizens is wholly bad! wholly bad! Bad tactics. Will cause trouble. Come to me to-morrow morning at half-past nine. Where are you putting up?"

"Black Hawk and I are camping outside the city," replied René.

The general rang a bell. The adjutant came in. "Send me Selby," said the chief. Lieutenant Selby entered the room.

"Mr. Selby, this is Mr. René LaFlamme. He is spending a few days in the city. Have the quartermaster assign him quarters. As to the Chief Black Hawk, Mr. LaFlamme, I suggest that he will be very comfortable with Chief Okonawin." He rang the bell again, and the adjutant appeared.

"Mr. Thompson, Mr. LaFlamme comes to meet me to-morrow morning at half-past nine. You will call a meeting of the officers for ten o'clock to-morrow morning. Take this map to the headquarters of the engineers. Have a duplicate copy made and enlarged. This must be ready by ten o'clock."

He shook hands warmly with René. "I am very much engaged to-day," he said, "but I can see you have done a good bit of work. To-morrow we shall discuss it further." René left the room in company with Lieutenant Selby.

"I say, LaFlamme, you have made a hit with the chief."

"I don't know," replied René. "He didn't seem to be very much pleased about it. He knows the country and Indians apparently as well as I do, if not better."

"You're right," replied Selby enthusiastically. "He knows more about Canada than ninety per cent. of the Canadians who have been living here twenty years. I venture to say that he knows more about the Indians of Canada than any Canadian Indian. He is a

marvel for details. Knows this country as I know Montreal, and that is saying something."

They spent the morning in going about the barracks, in observing the evolutions of the men upon the parade ground. They spent some time in the quarters of the French-Canadian soldiers where, to Lieutenant Selby's astonishment, René entered into fluent conversation with the French officers in their own tongue.

After lunch Lieutenant Selby rode with René about the city and in its environs. In the evening he took him to a play and late supper at one of Montreal's smartest restaurants. Shortly before midnight the lieutenant turned up at his own quarters.

"For heaven's sake, give me a drink!" he exclaimed as he staggered into the room. "I am a wreck! I have been doing a tour of inspection worse than any conducted by the chief himself. I am a rag, and to-morrow at half-past nine the thing begins again."

"What's the matter with you, Selby?" inquired Lieutenant Robinson.

"I have been trailing that wild young Canadian trader from the Far West. His thirst for military knowledge is utterly insatiable. We spent hours upon the parade ground, an hour or more watching the old Goulet put men through their sword practice and fencing. I assure you I have not had such a day for many months."

"Who is the young devil, anyway?" inquired Adjutant Thompson.

"Apparently from the Niagara district, Upper Canada. His father was a French officer, he tells me. His mother a lady of Highland Scots descent."

"Good stock enough, I guess."

"Speaks like a gentleman. Apparently well educated. Talks French like a native. But he must be made of whalebone and steel. I assure you, there was no tiring him. He has shortened my life by several years."

"He is certainly one young devil," replied Thompson. "I shall have to get even with him some time."

"Thompson," replied Selby with great earnestness, "give up the notion. Treat that young man with all respect and courtesy. I took him to the armory, and for an hour we stood watching old

Goulet putting the Frenchies, a class of officers, through their fencing exercises. He was quite unimpressed. In reply to old Goulet's question he modestly confessed that he fenced a little, and on being pressed took a turn at the foils with Rouleau, Goulet's best man. Let me tell you it was a show. Rouleau was on the defensive from the first moment. When that youngster stripped for business he was a perfect picture, thin as a lath, his ribs stuck out like those of a race horse, and the muscles under his skin ran like steel ribbons over his body. His wrist is of iron. He played with Rouleau. The Frenchman had all he could do to hold on to his weapon. Rouleau, mind you! The great and only! The young man says modestly that he boxes a little. If he boxes as little as he fences I shall take jolly good care to accept any insult from him. So I suggest to you, Thompson, that you leave him strictly alone. He seems a decent chap, though, modest, quiet, awfully decent. To-morrow I shall turn him over to you, Robinson. Good Lord, I am done up. Pass me the syphon."

Next morning at half-past nine René presented himself at the orderly room door and was taken at once to the room of the commander-in-chief. There he found Black Hawk in charge of Okonawin.

A new Brock met him. He greeted René with warm enthusiasm and spent half an hour in discussing personal affairs. Then he turned to the matter of René's trading experiences. "This is a fine bit of work, LaFlamme. I have been looking over your papers. A thorough bit of work and you have not spared yourself. Your work shows that. Your face shows it also."

At ten o'clock the officers came in.

"Gentlemen," said the general, "I have asked you here that you may meet Mr. LaFlamme. Mr. LaFlamme has been conducting some personal investigations in connection with our own Indians and the Indians along the American western frontier.

"Observe this map, gentlemen. This heavy line indicates the travels of Mr. LaFlamme and his friend Chief Black Hawk and represents a journey of something over a thousand miles covered by Mr. LaFlamme and his friend during the last five months or so. This journey, you must remember, was carried on during the depth of winter, over unknown trails, and among strange tribes.

Upon this map Mr. LaFlamme not only indicates the trails which he followed but gives complete and detailed information as to the physical features of the country through which he passed, the forests, swamps, waterways, camping grounds, and so forth. Further, in these papers Mr. LaFlamme furnishes us with data concerning the Indian tribes, their numbers, their chiefs, and so forth. The most valuable bit of Mr. LaFlamme's work, however, is his personal impressions of the Indians and of their state of mind toward the American people and toward our own country. Best of all, he has given us an intimate and very vivid picture of the great Shawnee Chief Tecumseh who for a number of years has been seeking to unite those Western tribes in a great confederacy for the defense of their country against the encroachment of the Americans.

"In carrying out this work I can see quite clearly that Mr. LaFlamme has shown the greatest tact and wisdom. He has carried on his work as a trader intent upon exploring and opening up new avenues for the fur trade with our merchants.

"Gentlemen, the situation in which we find ourselves at this present moment is extremely critical. You are aware that some months ago a request was made by Governor Sir James Craig to the home government for a minimum of twelve thousand troops for the defense of this country against possible invasion. As yet the Governor has received no response to that request, and the situation in Europe gives us little hope that in the immediate future we can depend upon any assistance from Britain. We must therefore rely upon our own resources. At the present moment in both Upper and Lower Canada and the Maritime Provinces we have no more than four thousand regular troops to defend the frontier of nearly two thousand miles exposed to attack from a nation numbering nearly eight million, rich in resources, unencumbered by debt, and many of them, I regret to say, eager for the extension of their northern border.

"The situation is grave, but, gentlemen, it is not hopeless. With a few hundred officers thoroughly disciplined and instructed in military science and showing such a spirit as you see evidenced in this young man before you, we shall be able to rouse in the peo-

ple of this country such a spirit of loyalty and courage as will make conquest of our country even by so powerful an enemy a difficult matter, yes, I believe, with anything like luck, an impossibility. That is all at the present moment, gentlemen. Mr. LaFlamme, I wish you to remain."

After the officers had retired the general assumed a more informal and friendly attitude. "Now, LaFlamme what are your plans, what next?" he inquired.

"I mean to go to school, sir," replied René. "I am thinking of going to Rev. George Okill Stuart, in York."

"I have been thinking this matter over," said the general. "You are wise in determining to go to school. In this country we shall require in civil life and in the army as well men of education. I am extremely anxious that my officers should give more attention than they do to reading. Why not proceed to Boston? There you have the finest schools on the Continent."

René shook his head. The poverty of his own resources forbade that plan, but he was too proud to say so.

"I am afraid, sir, that my uncle will require my help upon the farm during the busy seasons and that my school work will have to be very much broken up. I shall not be able to go far from home. I can only do the best I can."

"No, no!" replied the general. "That will not do. Some other arrangement must be made. I want you, I need you. And for the work I have in view you will require the best education you can get. Furthermore, I want you in Boston. I am anxious to have a man in Boston whom I can trust, upon whose judgment and tact I can rely. I wish to have you live in Boston, to get into touch with opinion there, with all shades of opinion."

"You want me to go to Boston, sir, apart from the schooling?" inquired René. "I'll go. I'll find some means of going. I shall doubtless be able to get something to do there while I am studying."

"No, no!" replied the general again. "You must be free of all concern in regard to things financial. In fact, you must be furnished with sufficient funds for your own personal requirements and for such other obligations as your work may entail. Your charges I shall assume responsibility for myself."

The Highland spirit in René rebelled. He flushed a deep red. "I'm afraid I couldn't agree to that, sir."

"Tut! tut!" said the general sharply. "You do not understand the situation. I am sending you upon a mission. You go at the charges of your country. You must be free from all embarrassment. You shall be under orders and under such conditions as I shall determine. The point is, are you willing to go?"

"I'll go, sir," said René promptly.

"Right again!" exclaimed the general, rising to his feet and offering René his hand. "I knew I was not mistaken in you."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE RUNAWAY

The firm of Hartman, Fisbee & Colebrook was one of the oldest and most highly respected, if not the oldest and most highly respected, firm in the city of Boston. They were solicitors for nearly half of the great trading companies of the city, among which the most prominent and by far the most solidly based was the American Fur & Lumber Company, which had a branch in every great city on the east coast of America. The president of the company was Eldridge Gerry, probably the best known man in the business world in the state of Massachusetts.

Mr. Gerry gave but little of his personal attention to the management of the American Fur & Lumber Company, which was under the direction of Mr. Gerry's brother-in-law, Colonel Danby, a gentleman who represented one of the old families of Virginia, but who for the last fifteen years had made his home in the city of Boston.

It was in the firm of Hartman, Fisbee & Colebrook that Hubert had found a position. By his knowledge of law, by his courteous bearing, by his strict attention to his duty, he had gained a high place in the confidence of the firm and in the esteem of its clientèle. It was to the advantage of the firm's Northern and Western business in furs that a young Canadian should be in their office.

In social life also Hubert at once became a pronounced success. From the very first he was admitted to the most exclusive circles of Boston society.

It was owing to a letter from Mr. Robert Hamilton of Queenstown to Mr. Fisbee that René secured at once a position in the firm of Hartman, Fisbee & Colebrook. At least, so René thought. It was probably no slight reinforcement to the communication from Mr. Hamilton that there came from the North West Fur & Trading Company of Montreal a latter to Mr. Hartman com-

mending to his notice and soliciting his good offices on behalf of the young Canadian from Niagara. As a very junior clerk René found himself immersed in the details of daily routine work common to such legal firms as that of Hartman, Fisbee & Colebrook who had large and important connections with many of the leading trading companies in the city of Boston. René's days were filled with office work, and more especially with the commercial side of the work which fell within the department presided over by Mr. Fisbee.

Hubert, after giving him a very hearty welcome to the firm, had left René very much to himself except when he had occasion to use him for some special service. It was on such an occasion that Hubert dropped in to René's cubbyhole that did for an office one afternoon in early spring.

"I say, old chap," he said, rushing in upon him, "will you copy out these things for me? We need them in court to-morrow morning. The old man is rather particular that his copy should be specially prepared. My own clerk is over the neck in work, and your handwrite is A No. 1."

"I should like to," said René, "but I have all this checking to do for Mr. Fisbee, and I can hardly see how I can get through both."

"What checking is that?" said Hubert. "Reports of fur and lumber, eh? Get some of the staff to do that. I must get——"

"No one apparently knows much about furs or lumber in this office. I happen to know something of both, and so I must give this my personal attention."

"But I've got to have this ready for to-morrow morning, and I'm engaged for the afternoon, you see."

"All right," replied René. It meant an all-night job for him.

"Good fellow!" said Hubert cordially. "Thanks awfully. The fact is, I've got to run out to Rankin's to look over his mare. I've got a bid on her. I bid too much I'm afraid, so I want to look her over. May have to hedge."

"I wouldn't put too much on her," said René. "I was taking my run in the country the other day. I saw her on her trials. She hasn't got the bottom. She threw up her tail the last hundred yards."

"By Jove! I must look into that."

"She may be all right. I am giving you my opinion."

At this point the door opened quickly, and a young girl of about seventeen burst in upon them.

"Oh, I say, Hubert, what is keeping you? Aren't you—— Oh, I beg pardon," as René rose from his desk. "You're busy."

"No, no," replied Hubert, "giving some instructions to my clerk. Oh, by the way, Nora, let me introduce you to a young friend of mine from Canada, Mr. René LaFlamme. René, this is Miss Nora Danby."

René acknowledged the introduction with a bow.

"How long have you been in Boston, Mr. LaFlamme?" said Nora.

"About two months."

"Now, Hubert, what do you mean keeping your young friend from Canada hidden in this way from all your friends? Bring him along at once to see the ponies. Come along, Mr. LaFlamme. Your first name is René, much nicer than LaFlamme, much nicer. Mine is Nora. Call me Nora. Come along! Get your hat, we're tooling down to Rankin's stables, only five or six miles. Where's your hat?"

René smiled at her. "You make my job very hard, Miss Danby."

"What is your job?" she inquired, coming round to his desk and looking over his shoulder. "What is it about, Hubert? What is it about?" she repeated impatiently.

"Furs and lumber," replied Hubert.

"Furs! There's nothing doing in furs. I heard Father say so the other day. Furs are dead."

"It's a case for to-morrow," said Hubert, "and just because furs are dead this case must be attended to. My old man insists on having these lists copied out in beautiful handwriting before ten o'clock to-morrow, and inasmuch as my handwriting is anything but beautiful and René writes a hand like copper plate, I have just asked him to do this for me. The fact of the matter is, Nora, this case is one in which your respected father Colonel Danby is deeply interested."

"Oh, rubbish!" cried the girl. "Ten o'clock to-morrow morn-

ing. Why, that's nineteen hours away. Isn't that clever of me? You're just making excuses, Hubert. You don't want your friend to come."

"Not at all," declared Hubert. "René has a lot of other work waiting, besides this that I have given him."

"Do you know horses, René?" inquired Nora.

"A little," replied René.

"He knows a lot about horses, and, as a matter of fact, two years ago he used to own the fastest colt in Upper Canada, I believe."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," replied René. "She is a good colt, but there may be many better. I have not tried them all."

"There is none better. Let's see, two years ago—no, nearly three years ago—my sister rode his horse, René was away somewhere, trapping or something, and his jockey got pickled, so my little sister rode his mare. Won too, by Jove! and a dashed good race it was."

"Hubert, make him come," cried Nora. "He really ought to look Fleetwing over, you know. I am not satisfied with her, and I don't want to lose my money. Really, can't you come, René?"

"Not to-day," said René.

"We'll get him down one of these days, Nora," said Hubert. "Now we must get away."

"Well, I think you are both mean old things, both of you," cried Nora with a delightful pout. "You'll come when? To-morrow? Say to-morrow, Hubert."

Hubert pulled out his notebook. "To-morrow, Tuesday. No not to-morrow. Nor Wednesday. Nor—Thursday. What about Friday, Nora?"

"Won't do at all," said Nora decidedly. "Everything will be gone in the way of odds before Friday and I have determined I shan't bid till I have René's opinion. And I think you ought to have it too, Hubert. You really don't know horses, you know. Why not say to-morrow?"

"To-morrow is filled up," protested Hubert.

"What with?"

"As a matter of fact, your brother——"

Nora gave a shout of joy. "Oh, if it's Michael I'll fix him up. To-morrow does. To-morrow René? What?"

"No," replied René slowly. "I am due at the warehouse to-morrow. I can't possibly get away."

"Warehouse! What warehouse?" asked Nora indignantly.

"Your father's, I believe. It is quite important." He turned to Hubert and added in a low voice, "Loading a ship, you know."

"Oh yes! Yes indeed! I clean forgot that. Guess I should be there too. No, we certainly can't go to-morrow. Say Friday Nora, awfully sorry, it's my first free day."

"Very well, then. Friday be it. Good-bye." She shook hands with René. "I'm glad I've found you. My goodness gracious, won't the girls be green. Good-bye. Friday it is. Come, Hubert, let us hurry."

"Oh, isn't he handsome," she said when the door closed upon them. "And a perfect dear he is, too. Who is he? LaFlamme—French-Canadian. What is he? Why didn't you bring him up to see me?"

Hubert hesitated and stammered in his reply. "I don't know exactly. I don't believe he goes in for that sort of thing—fact is—I didn't know him very well at home—he was just a youngster—smart youngster, though."

"What is he?" insisted Nora. "Is he a gentleman? What are his people?"

"A gentleman? Well, I don't know that you would call him just a gentleman. He lives with an old soldier, a sergeant major in a Highland battalion. Good enough people. His father, I believe, was a French officer, rather a waster. By the way, though, he fought on your side against us in the Revolutionary War."

"Oh, goody, that's one good thing!" cried Nora. "I knew he was all right. An American soldier."

"Not a bit of it," replied Hubert. "A French officer. Fought against the British at Quebec and later in the Revolutionary War. Went West, met somewhere the sister of this Sergeant Major Ross. Highland Scotch you know. Proud as Lucifer. This young fellow is their son. Father and mother dead. René lives with his uncle. A rabid Britisher, hates the Americans, I think."

Nora smiled confidently. "We must change that. But isn't he splendid? A trapper, eh? Hunter? Oh, yes. He knows furs. That's why you have him in this thing."

"Yes, he knows furs. He used to spend a great part of his time with the Indians in our country. Well I guess that will do for him. I want to ask you something."

"Oh," cried Nora enthusiastically, "I can't wait till Friday! He is so handsome! Won't the girls be wild? I must see him before Friday. Somehow I will. Let's see, I shall call to see you at your office to-morrow. I shall have to go through his office. Oh, I'll find a way. You just bet on that."

"No doubt you will. Poor René. I predict a fall for him. Now, Nora, I want to know how many dances you are to give me at your ball two weeks hence!"

"My ball! It's not my ball. It's my Uncle Gerry's ball. A very grand thing it will be, too. He has invited a lot of old politicians. It will be monstrously dull. Of course I have a new dress for it. That's something."

"But how many dances?" persisted Hubert.

"Ha-ha! I don't know. You see, René will be there."

Hubert scorned her. "René? Not he. Why, he can't even dance. A French breakdown or a Scotch reel, that's the extent of his dancing. I tell you he does not go out at all."

"But why not?" said Nora.

"He's too busy. He's a hard worker, all day in the office and every night at school. Oh, he's a worker. You can't get anything out of him. No girl has a place in his scheme of life."

"We'll see," said Nora, looking much pleased. "No girl in his life, eh? To-morrow, Hubert, I shall be calling upon you." The morrow, however, brought its own troubles. Precisely at ten o'clock Hubert appeared in court bringing to Mr. Fisbee a copy of the details required, clear and clean.

All day René was at the warehouse in which his firm's client Colonel Danby kept his store of furs and other merchandise. Filled to the roof, it was, mostly with bales of furs, and not a ship sailing.

Britain's frigates just outside the harbor saw to that. They were ever so much more effective than even America's embargo. The

merchants of New York and Boston were in despair. They were sick of the embargo, which effected nothing but the destruction of American trade. The government itself was sick of the embargo and consequently often turned a blind eye toward the blockade runners. The American Fur & Lumber Company, like every other company in the coast cities, driven to desperation by the blockade outside and the embargo inside, sought ways and means of reducing the enormous stores of merchandise that filled their warehouses from floor to ceiling.

An enterprising shipmaster from New Brunswick was willing to take a chance of running the blockade with a load of furs to Canada, whence it might be shipped across the seas to British or Continental ports. Of course, the Republicans, as loyal Americans began to be called, would be hotly indignant over this flouting of their government's regulations. Gladly would they have blown out of the water Britain's old tubs which kept guard outside the harbor.

These Federalists were all traitors at heart. Their leaders ought to be strung up to the lamp posts. They were especially wrathful against the editors of the Federalist press, notably the editor of the Boston *Constitution*. Joyously would they have seen him dangle at the end of a rope from a window of his own printing office. But business was business, and though Mr. Colebrook, good old Republican that he was, would have been glad to aid in the hanging of the editor of the *Constitution* out of his own window, still he did not conceive it to be his duty to inquire too closely into the shipping activities of the American Fur & Lumber Company. These matters were in the hands of Mr. Fisbee. Hence, the loading of the ship proceeded without interruption, at least from any members of the firm whose duty it was to watch over the legal interests of the American Fur & Lumber Company.

Hubert, on his way from court in the early afternoon, felt called upon to take a route home that led by the warehouse of the American Fur & Lumber Company. There was just a danger that hot-headed Republicans, getting wind of this loading of the ship, might make things unpleasant for those engaged in the operation. René would be there, supervising the shipping and organizing defences if necessary. He was a thoroughgoing chap and could

be trusted to carry to a conclusion anything handed over to his care. Old Fisbee, a shrewd judge of men, had selected him for this duty. Old Fisbee would certainly not be present. With the manager of the company, Colonel Danby, giving general oversight, and his clerk René giving attention to the details of shipping bills and packing, Fisbee felt it unnecessary that he should be personally identified with this particular operation. It was not the first time that Colonel Danby had successfully ignored the embargo. Many an American ship captain could be found who, under stress of weather, would slip in to the safe anchorage of a Nova Scotian or New Brunswick port and there remain until the storm had moderated when, much lighter in ballast, he would make his way safely home again.

While Republicans were more or less annoyed at the persistent ignoring of the embargo by smugglers, this flouting of the authority of their government was more or less condoned under pressure of business necessity. Their indignation was chiefly directed to those who persistently maintained a friendly attitude toward Great Britain in the face of successive insults to the American flag by the search of American ships for British deserters, and more especially in spite of the injury of American commerce by confiscation of their trading vessels.

For many months Republican fury had been growing in volume and intensity against the editor of the Boston *Constitution*. The afternoon edition just issued contained a broadside against the War-hawk party in the Congress. The broadside poured contempt upon the futility of the government's legislation in its shipping laws and in its idea of naval defense. Assuming a high moral tone, the article bitterly reproached American Republicans for their sympathy with that arch enemy of human liberty, the bloody tyrant Napoleon. The editorial bit deep, and hence, this particular afternoon, a considerable crowd of Republicans and their sympathizers had gathered about the door of the office of the *Constitution*. One or two policemen were apparent in the crowd, good-humoredly tolerant of the hoots and roars of the mob. Every minute the crowd increased in size and in fury. At length a small boy brought matters to a head by hurling a stone through a window of the *Constitution* printing office. There is

something highly stimulating to the passions in the sound of crashing glass. A few moments the mob waited, to note the effect of this open act of lawlessness upon the guardians of the peace. There was no effect apparent. Immediately a dozen stones, then many dozens of missiles of all sorts crashed into the *Constitution* building. In a quarter of an hour not a pane of glass nor a window sash remained. Following the demolition of the windows, the crowd, excited by its success, charged the door, burst it open, hesitated for a single moment, then, driven by the momentum of its own weight, swept like a flood into the office of the *Constitution*. Once inside the sight of the offending presses at work was enough. From somewhere hammers, axes, handspikes appeared. In another quarter of an hour the office and workshop were a ruin.

Thereupon the mob, its blood up, looking around for further objects on which to wreak its fury, caught sight of Colonel Danby's flashy team of grays drawing toward the warehouse of the American Fur & Lumber Company, a block away. Immediately a shout went up, "Down with the law breakers! Down with the smugglers! America forever! To hell with Great Britain and the Federalists!" With a yell the senseless mob, led by a red-headed giant of a man, dashed after the carriage and got into the yard of the American Fur & Lumber Company. There, led by the red-headed giant, the mob, glad of an object upon which to wreak their rage, surged round Colonel Danby's carriage shouting, "To hell with Great Britain and the Federalists!" Standing upon the seat of his carriage, the colonel faced them, his daughter standing behind him.

"Who calls me a Federalist? I want to tell you that the man who does so is a liar." The colonel was quite cool. His voice drawled out the words in an easy, leisurely manner.

"What about that ship you are loading behind your warehouse?" cried a voice.

The colonel scorned to lie. "What about it?" he asked.

"You're agin the embargo," answered the voice.

"Yes, I am. Ain't you? I'm a loyal American, but I want to sell my tobacco, cotton, and furs."

"You're agin the government," shouted the red-headed giant.

"You're a liar, sir," replied the colonel.

"You're breaking the law! You're helping out the British!" answered the leader.

"Again let me inform you," replied the colonel coolly, "that you are a liar."

At this point René appeared at the door of the warehouse. Hurriedly he walked over to the carriage.

"Had you not better come in, sir?" he said in an anxious voice.

"No," replied the colonel, "not just yet."

"Then let me conduct your daughter to a safer place."

"No!" cried Nora her cheeks glowing red, her eyes blazing fire. "Not much! I wouldn't miss this for a new hat."

"Now, then, men," shouted the colonel. "You clear out of this yard. I'm as loyal an American as any one of you. I'm no Federalist. But I don't believe in the embargo, and no loyal American does who has any interest in the business of this country. You have no business here, so get out." He took his tall whip from its socket.

"Come, move!" he cried and cracked his whip. The plunging horses, excited by the uproar, dashed into the crowd, scattering them right and left. Arrived at the red-headed giant, they met with an immovable obstacle. The man caught one of the horses by the bridle, twisted the iron rings of the bit into a cruel knot, and forced the horse back upon his haunches, nearly upsetting the carriage.

"Hold these reins, Nora," cried the colonel, flinging her the reins and springing from the carriage toward the giant. But René was before him. Like a wolf at the deer's throat he sprang. His fingers clutched the big red throat as might a wolf's jaws the throat of a deer. A mighty heave he gave, flinging the big head over his shoulders as a wolf might fling a doe. The horses sprang free and dashed circling about the yard, Nora holding for dear life all the time by a single rein.

"Hold on, Nora!" cried the colonel, rushing after his horses, but again René was before him.

With a trick which he had often practised among the Indians, he took a quick run, leaped at the near horse, swung himself

astride, reached for the cross reins, and guided the galloping team through the gate and up the narrow street.

"Whither away, Nora?" he cried, flinging a laugh over his shoulder.

"Let's make for the open country," shouted the girl. "Give them all they want."

"They'll take that anyway," yelled René.

Apparently the grays were set upon just that thing, for they were running heads down, bellies flattened to the ground, mad with fright, paying no regard whatever to René's steady pull on the reins. This was by no means the first time that René had ridden runaway horses. Keeping a steady pressure on the bits he began talking to them in a low tone, laughing over them, gripping now and then their necks with fingers that bit deep into their rigid muscles. How he succeeded in threading his way through the crowding traffic he never knew. Gradually the racing team emerged into quieter streets.

"Which way to the country?" called René.

"Straight on to the left," cried the girl, holding for dear life to the railing of the rocking carriage.

On for some minutes dashed the runaways.

"Which way, right or left? Quick!" yelled René as they approached a forked road.

"Left, left!" shrieked the girl wildly. "The other leads downhill to a bad bridge." But in spite of all René could do, the near horse, running free and slightly in advance of the off horse, which carried René on his back, edged the other into the right fork of the road. A turn in the road revealed a declivity before them, steep and twisting.

"There's a bridge, an awful bridge!" shrieked Nora.

René glanced before him and saw the dangerous bridge. The bank sloped gently down from the roadway toward a board fence. Instantly he made his choice. Reaching far down for the inside rein of the near horse with both hands he threw his whole weight upon the rein, swung the horses' heads toward the right down the slope and straight toward the board fence. The team plunged headlong. A crash and the horses stood amid the ruins of the fence

with shaking limbs and heaving flanks. On the grass lay René, white and still.

Nora, dazed and trembling, stumbled toward his side, kneeling beside him, lifted his head into her lap and loosened his collar. "René!" she cried, shaking him slightly. "Oh, God! He is dead!" she cried wildly. Laying his head down on the grass she kneeled beside him. "Oh, God, tell me what to do!" Starting to her feet, she gazed about. There was no one in sight. At the bottom of the hill ran a stream. She dashed down the hill, tore off her petticoat, soaked it in the stream, stumbled up the hill again, and began wiping his face, moaning over him the while. "René, René, oh, René boy. Can't you hear me?" But there was no movement or sign of life in the white face. "Oh, René boy! Why did you do it? You killed yourself for me." She laid her face beside the white still face, pressed her lips to his cheek, then to his lips. Again she knelt and prayed: "Oh, God is there nothing I can do? Tell me, God, tell me!" Suddenly she remembered that in such cases water ought to be dashed upon the face. How could she carry water to him? She rushed to the carriage. Under the seat she found a quart measure for oats. Downhill she rushed, and returning with the water, dashed the whole quart upon René's face. Instantly there was a flicker of the eyelids, a little moaning breath. Away she rushed again to the stream and back again with the water, found René with wide-open eyes staring up at her. "Oh!" she cried joyously and again dashed the whole quart of water on his face.

"Here what the devil——?" he said, sputtering and gasping.

Away she rushed again, and returning with more water stood ready to sluice him once more.

"Here! Stop it! I'm not a fire."

"Oh, René! Are you sure you're alive?" she cried, sobbing and laughing.

"Alive! I'm nearly drowned!" he gasped. Once more he sank back upon the grass.

"Oh! Don't go off again!" she cried, seizing the vessel.

He sat up quickly. "Say! Don't you do that again, or I'll put your head in that stream!" he exclaimed wrathfully.

"Oh! No! No! Oh, glory!" she cried, dancing about him ecstatically.

"What's happened, Nora?" He gazed stupidly about, his eyes finally falling upon the horses. "Ah! We've stopped the beggars."

"Yes, they ran into the fence."

"The fence. Oh, yes! Thank God, the fence did it. Are the horses all right?"

"The horses!" she exclaimed. "I don't know. I don't care. You're alive. Oh, René, I thought you were dead!"

He continued to gaze about him. His eyes fell upon the sopping garment. "I say, where did you get——"

"Give me that!" she exclaimed, her face a rich red, and snatched the garment from his hands.

"I'm a nice mess!" he said, staggering to his feet and looking down at himself.

"Oh, you are! You're a perfectly lovely mess. Oh-ah-ah!" She went off into wild laughter.

"I'm glad you see the fun of it," he said crossly, and with his hand upon her shoulder he staggered down to the stream and put his head into the water. Rising, he found her white and with blue lips.

"What's the matter?" he said. "You look as if——"

"I feel rather queer," she mumbled through her lips.

"Stop it," he said sharply, giving her a little shake, "or I'll put your head into that stream."

"You wouldn't dare."

"Dare me with any fainting nonsense and you will see," he said.

"You—you—I think you're a brute!" The red had come back again into her face.

"Well, I guess you're all right now," said René, viewing her critically. "Let's see about the horses."

"The horses!" she exclaimed wrathfully. "Go and look after your old horses. I hate them! And I hate you too!"

"Good," he replied coolly and went over to the horses.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE HERO

THE next day René found himself famous throughout the city of Boston. His exploit in rescuing from almost certain death a member of one of Boston's most distinguished families exalted him to the rank of a hero. He had hardly settled down to his desk in the morning when a stream of men and women whom he had never seen began to flow into his office. René was very wrathful, and at a convenient moment he closed his office and escaped by a back door. All that day and the day following he spent his time in seeking to dodge those who from various motives came to do him honor. Seeking out his chief, Mr. Fisbee, he demanded protection.

"I'm not going to stand this, sir," he said. "It is all perfectly ridiculous. What else could I do? It's no trick to climb aboard a galloping horse. I've done it hundreds of times. And even so, I made a mess of it at the last."

"Tut-tut, boy!" said Mr. Fisbee, patting him on the shoulder. "Go on about your business where you like to-day. I'll have another room for you to-morrow."

For a week he managed by secluding himself in his office to preserve his days from interruption, but however he might be able to escape the general public and the importunities of Hubert and his friends, there was one whom he could not escape. At the end of a week Nora found him out.

"Here's where you are!" she exclaimed, eyes and voice full of reproach and indignation. "I don't mind your shutting yourself up from these new friends of yours, but that you should try to hide yourself from me!"

"But, Nora," he pleaded, "I cannot stand this fool crowd coming about me and making a hero out of me."

"But, René," and the girl's eyes grew soft and her voice tender, "you know you saved my life. Do you think I can ever forget that? You may shut me out from your room and you may shut me out of your heart, but you can't make me forget."

"Nora," he said, stretching his hand toward her across the table, "I won't forget, and you won't forget. All our life we shall be dear friends, not because I saved your life—any man would have done the same—but because I have come to know you, and perhaps you know me a little too."

"That's good enough," said Nora, putting her hand in his. "We will always be friends no matter what happens, René, but now," she exclaimed briskly, "I want you for my ball."

René gazed at her aghast.

"Yes, my ball, or at least my Uncle Gerry's ball. All the big people in Boston and a good many little people too will be there. For I know well enough that Uncle Gerry means something more than friendship by this ball of his. I'll tell you a secret, and it's only for yourself. Uncle Gerry means to run for governor of this state. He is a terrible Republican. He hates the Federalists, loathes them, detests them, and he hates the present governor. He says he's a traitor to America and a secret friend of Britain. Oh, Uncle Gerry is no fool. He wants the governorship for himself, for he is terribly ambitious, but more than anything else he wants to drive the Federalists out of power in Massachusetts, and so he is pulling every wire that will pull and rolling every hoop that will roll, to get what he wants. And he'll get there, René. All his life Uncle Gerry has got the things he wanted. But it will be a great ball, and I've put you down for it, and you are to dance the first dance with me."

René's mind worked swiftly. His first impulse was to decline utterly and irrevocably the invitation to the ball. He had never been present at a ball, and beyond a French breakdown or a Scotch reel he was completely ignorant of the art of dancing.

But this was not Nora's ball but Uncle Gerry's. It was a move in the great political game that was being played all through the United States of America. Massachusetts was the stronghold for the Federalist party, definitely and strongly opposed to war with Great Britain, hating the French and their upstart Emperor,

and opposed to the legislation of the present government. Gerry was determined to change all this. Apparently his personal ambition and his passionate hatred of Britain followed coincident lines. Much as he dreaded and loathed the prospect of a ball where he well knew he would play the rôle of a fish on dry land, René parleyed with the idea of accepting Nora's invitation.

"But, Nora," he protested, "I cannot dance."

Immediately Nora was intrigued by the revelation. "Have you never tried?"

"A Scotch reel or a schottische or a French breakdown, but never any of your silly modern waltzes or mazurkas."

The girl clapped her hands in ecstasy. No one had ever taught him. She would teach him herself. She would arrange an hour to suit his convenience. She would break all her engagements and put herself at his disposal.

"But," said René, "my days are full and all my nights are taken up. I go to school every evening and study till midnight."

"And have you done that ever since you came to Boston?"

"Every night," he said.

"Then you can easily spare a few nights this week."

René declared that was impossible. He had engaged private tutors, and nothing must be allowed to break in upon his work.

"What about the afternoons?" inquired Nora.

"I am engaged in this office till six o'clock."

"But surely you have an hour to yourself throughout the day?" Let him name the hour and she would engage to teach him. "In the morning before breakfast?"

"I breakfast at seven."

"During the lunch hour?"

"I run out for a snack at noon."

"When does the office close?"

"At six."

"Are all the clerks away at six?"

"Mostly. Occasionally a clerk stays after hours to tidy up work."

Well, she would come to-morrow at a quarter after six, and if all the clerks were away she would give him a lesson.

René almost turned pale at the thought. "What, here? All alone?"

"Yes, here! I'll bring Sally Fisbee with me, of course."

"Oh!" His relief was so apparent that Nora laughed in his face.

"Oh, you baby! You were afraid I was coming alone."

René blushed his confusion.

"And why shouldn't I come alone?" she demanded. "You wouldn't hurt me, and I'm sure I wouldn't hurt you."

René was quite sure she would not hurt him, but, all the same, he was doubtful of the propriety of allowing even two young ladies to come to his office to instruct him in the modern dances.

"Oh, don't be silly!" cried the girl. "I'm going to teach you the waltz and the mazurka, and Sally Fisbee is the best dancer in Boston."

"Don't believe it!" cried René. "I know a girl that can teach her."

"Oh—h! I see! Very nice indeed. Now I'm going to give you as many dances as you want at my ball."

"But I couldn't dance with you. I'd look like a clodhopper and would make you look like I don't know what," he finished rather lamely.

"Clodhopper? In evening clothes you will look divine."

"I don't know about that," replied René. "I never wore any."

"Never what? Well, never mind," she added quickly, noticing the flush on the young man's face. "You've never needed to wear them. But——" She hesitated.

"Oh, yes, I have a suit," said René.

"Then," cried Nora, "you will be the best looking man at the ball. Better looking even than Hubert—though I wouldn't say so to him—and Hubert, you know, is a very handsome man, but you will outshine him that night." The Irish gray-blue eyes looked at him from under their dark arching eyebrows with a slumbering fire in them. "Oh, I can just see you," she added with a deep intake of breath, "and after the very first dance I won't see you again. The girls will all be wild about you."

René only grunted. "Never danced with a girl in my life."

"Oh!" sighed Nora. "How lovely! You mean your very first

dance will be with me! Oh, that will be heavenly! Remember, now, you promise. No matter what happens, your first dance is with me!" Her warm Irish eyes glowed at him. Her radiant beauty warmed his heart.

"No need to promise," he said, "I shall be afraid of everyone else."

"How perfectly divine! It is so good of you. Now I must run. Here's Hubert for me. Good-bye. To-morrow at a quarter after six," she added hurriedly below her breath.

The fates were propitious. At a quarter after six the following evening the offices of Hartman, Fisbee & Colebrook were clear of clerks and at twenty minutes after six René was being given his first lesson in the Terpsichorean art in Mr. Fisbee's large and commodious private office.

René proved quick enough with his lessons. He was light on his feet. He had the perfect poise of the trained athlete. He had that without which perfection in the art is impossible, a sense of rhythm. In half an hour he had caught the trick of the waltz movement and stood in need only of further practice. Nora was slightly disappointed.

"Why," cried Sally, "that boy needs no more lessons!"

"Nonsense, Sally!" exclaimed Nora indignantly. "He will need a lesson every day this week, and he's going to get one, too. To-morrow, at the same hour. Remember, René."

Having determined to adventure into the mysteries and perils of the ballroom floor, René also determined that he should be fit for the ordeal. On his way home from the office that evening he entered the first dancing academy he saw and put in a hard hour's practice with the lissome and fascinating French mistress.

"In seex mont's," she exclaimed, admiration dancing in her black eyes, "you will have ze beautiful grace!"

"Six months!" exclaimed René. "I have got to learn all about it in six nights."

"Mon Dieu!" cried the French lady, her hands high above her head, "eet eez not poss-ee-ble."

"It must be done," said René. "I am going to a ball, and I am going to dance. I will give you an hour every day, and I will practise three hours every night."

The lady was in despair, but with the courage of despair she threw herself into the impossible task.

His progress amazed the delighted Sally and the disgusted Nora. After the third evening Nora found she had nothing more to teach him in regard to the mystery and finesse of the waltz.

"Here, Sally," she cried, after a final turn on the fourth evening. "You can polish him off. Young man, I would have you know that I am introducing you to the finest dancer in Boston society."

"Come, then, René, let's try the mazurka," said Sally. "It is very simple. You can learn it in half an hour."

Although René had spent hours with the French dancing mistress over the mazurka, he took pains that his first lesson should show no signs of his familiarity with the art. At the end of the hour, however, he was declared even by the reluctant Nora to be perfect. At the close of the last lesson Nora expressed her deliberate opinion to her friend Sally.

"He is perfect. He will have all the new dances at the very first attempt, and they'll all be wanting to teach him."

"No fear of that, Nora," said René. "I shall never have another teacher and shall probably never have another dance."

"We'll see to that. Waste all my instructions on a single ball? You wouldn't be so dreadful."

But René would make no promise. He frankly confessed that the dance had for him a vast fascination, but he was, nevertheless, quite resolved that for him the dance would have but a small place in his life. He had not come to Boston to learn to dance.

"What, then, have you come for?" inquired Sally.

"I want to get myself fit for work at home," he said.

Nora studied his set face and sighed. He was made of stone and steel, she declared. He had no heart, or else some other girl had secured the keeping of it. That she would find out later, but her heart stood still for a bit as she found herself hoping to God that he was heart-free. She must find that out. She could not ask Hubert. She could ask no one but himself. He was honest. If she could only screw up her courage to the point of questioning him. She knew his answer would be straightforward and direct. She pictured clearly to herself with what cool control and with what

a steady glance in his black eyes he would make his answer. She hoped something, however, from the ball. She would have her chance and she would take it. Her aunt would call her bold, would be shocked. What cared she? She was playing the great game. The most ancient, the most thrilling, the most deadly game known to man and woman.

The ball was given in the house of Elbridge Gerry. Elbridge Gerry was a man of wealth and knew better than most men how to make wealth serve rather than enslave him. For years he had been spending money with lavish care and with a definite purpose. He was an enthusiastic American, an Anglophobe indeed, but his hatred of Great Britain was surpassed by his cold hate of the Federalists among his own people. Them he considered traitors to their country, and for the past half-dozen years he had set himself to destroy them from his own state root and branch. It was no small task, for Massachusetts was strongly pro-British. She hated France and its new upstart Emperor, admired British culture, British manners, and especially Britain's gallant fight for European liberty. But a change in sentiment was coming throughout the state. Elbridge Gerry's keenly sensitive political instinct revealed this to him. His political proclivities flowed in the line of his personal ambitions. He had determined to capture the position of governor of the state. His vast wealth he had been spending in the business world, in club life, in sporting circles, with a view to further his ambition.

Up to this time, however, he had ignored the sacred circle of Boston's highly cultured social life. The Gerry ball therefore had for him a very special political significance.

Ever since the death of his wife some six years ago, his sister, Miss Amanda Gerry, had presided over his household. Miss Amanda Gerry was totally devoid of social ambition. She loved comfort and quiet. She was of Puritan stock and was devoted chiefly to her church. She found an outlet for her energy and ability in religious activities and works of mercy. But she was also devoted, and passionately, to her brother's interests, and she was shrewd enough to see at once the immense advantage to his ambition of a capitalized social leadership. She was resolved that the Gerry adventure upon the perilous seas of Boston society

should be boldly but warily launched. The ball would be upon a scale of magnificence never equaled in Boston's history.

Miss Amanda thought it wise, however, to take counsel with Boston's select ladies in the social world, with whom she had maintained hitherto only a formal acquaintance. Frankly she invited their coöperation, confessing an entire ignorance of the necessary technique, with the result that the great ladies of Boston, flattered by her confidence, determined to make the Gerry adventure their own and threw themselves with tremendous enthusiasm into the preparations for the ball.

On one point alone Amanda's opinion diverged from theirs. She was determined to extend the invitation list beyond the severely defined limits of Boston's select social circle. Political leaders from all sections of the country were invited. Mr. Gerry's private rooms were set apart for their entertainment. It was not necessary that they should make an appearance upon the ballroom floor. The danger of any shock to the sensibilities of the Boston elect would thus be almost entirely eliminated.

It was quite ten o'clock when René arrived. He had had trouble with his evening clothes and, although for three successive evenings in the near seclusion of his bedroom he had worn the unfamiliar habiliments dedicated to social life, he still felt unsure of himself in his unusual trappings. The multiplicity of points and buttons confused him. He was too shy and too proud to ask advice, except from the gentlemen outfitters who had undertaken his equipment and adornment, but their invaluable advice was not now available. It took him a good half hour to adjust his ruffled shirt and voluminous neckcloth. These, with his knee breeches and buckled shoes, filled him with a sense of humiliation. He felt like a popinjay. There were terrible moments in those hours of stress, in his bedroom, when he was on the point of rending the foolish and unmeaning appurtenances into rags and flinging them out of his window.

At ten o'clock, however, he found himself in a fever of excitement at a side door of the Gerry mansion, where by a previous arrangement with Nora a servant met him and conducted him to a small waiting chamber. Here Nora found him. As he flung off

his cloak and stood before her his cheeks burned with a red fury of rage and self loathing.

"Look at me!" he cried. "I feel like an ass."

Nora looked him over, at first earnestly critical, at length completely delighted.

"Turn around," she ordered.

He wheeled round like a top.

"Stand still," she commanded, observing him from different points of view, her eyes glowing with deep fire. Finally, after a long and silent survey, she sat down without a word.

"Well!" he exclaimed in anxious wrath. "Out with it. I can still escape."

"Oh, René!" at length she gasped, her face actually pale.

"What's the matter?" he inquired in alarm.

"The matter! Dear boy! You are simply adorable! Heavenly! I am positively terrified to bring you in."

"If it weren't for you I wouldn't go in at all. Thank God," he added, "if you take me in they won't see me."

Under his ardent eyes the rich blood flooded her lovely face and neck and shoulders. "Flatterer," she said softly. "You terrible flatterer."

"It's God's truth. They won't look at me. You are the loveliest young thing in Boston," he declared solemnly.

"How do you know?" she inquired saucily. "You haven't seen all the lovely creatures in there waiting to devour you."

"No, but not one of them can touch you, Nora. They may be lovely creatures, but their beauty will pale before yours as the stars at dawn." He came near to her, with hands outstretched.

"Nora," he said deliberately, tenderly, "you are divine. I couldn't have believed that clothes would make such a difference. I always thought you beautiful, but to-night—well—you paralyze and comfort me. I shall be safe with you."

The girl rose to meet him, her heartbeats choking her. She put her hands in his and stood silent, with eyes downcast, fearing to venture speech, afraid he might see the pulses of her heartbeats under her laces. Then, slowly, daringly, she lifted her eyes to his, reckless of their telltale eloquence, and waited. Would he read there the thing she dared not yet longed to reveal? She was

his. She knew the sweet, the terrible truth fully now. Had he not saved her life? How long they stood thus neither of them knew. His hands closed more tightly on hers. He drew her slowly toward him. The door opened, and the maid came in.

"Oh!" she gasped and fled.

The great moment had passed.

Hastily Nora turned from him toward a side table, her trembling hands playing with the things thereon while she struggled to check her starting tears.

"What are you looking for?" asked René.

"Nothing—oh, nothing—my fan," she answered desperately. "I must have left it in the other room—wait for me for a moment." She dashed from the room and in a few moments returned, her radiant, smiling self. "Come," she cried offering him her hand. "On to the slaughter! Alas, poor victims!"

"All right, then," he said, "but be merciful to the unhappy brutes."

"Mercy? Mercy? No! None!" she cried gayly, and piloting him into a glittering chattering throng she brought him straight to her aunt Gerry.

The ballroom to René was a terrifying maze of whirling figures, bewildering in their loveliness. Having made his bow he stood at Nora's side trembling, conscious only of one distinct desire, and that to escape.

"Come, René," whispered Nora, lifting up her arms toward him. Into the whirling maze he slipped, with Nora in his arms. After the first turn of the room his confidence began to return.

"You might have been in this thing from the days of your infancy," murmured Nora giving her body to his will, "and to think that I am the first girl you have held in your arms."

"The very first girl I have ever danced with," he replied.

"Ah," she said with a little stab at her heart, noting his qualification. "Won't you tell me about her?"

"What? Oh, yes, I'll tell you about her," he said gently and drew her closer to him.

At the conclusion of the waltz Hubert, with Sally on his arm, came demanding of Nora the next dance as his.

"Now then, René, wake up," said Sally. "She is a lovely girl, of

course. The loveliest in the room. But I am here, and you owe me something, too."

"That I do," said René as they swung off into the circle of dancers.

Sally Fisbee was by all odds the most perfect dancer in the room, and at the close of their first dance she was immediately sought by a young man whose strikingly handsome face was somewhat marred by a look of supercilious contempt at her partner, which he made little effort to conceal.

"My dance, I think, Sally," he said, claiming her with almost rude insistence.

"Run away, Steele," said Sally. "I am about to instruct my pupil in the finer touches of the mazurka. Wait. You must know Mr. René LaFlamme. René, my friend Mr. Steele Gresham of Virginia."

"No," said the young man, coolly looking René over. "I haven't the extreme pleasure, but," bowing stiffly toward René, "I am not prepared to surrender you to him."

"But you must, Steele," said Sally. "He has never done a mazurka at a ball in his life, and he is very shy."

"He looks anything but shy, if you ask me, and, anyway, this is my dance. In a moment or two I shall begin to dislike him intensely."

"Dislike him? And why, pray?"

"Because," replied Steele with a reluctant smile, "he is going to deprive me of the loveliest dancer in the room."

"Oh, run away, Steele, and find Nora. There she is. You know you are dying to waltz with her."

"Nora? That other Canadian has captured her. She has two more waltzes before she takes me on."

"Steele, run away. You must give us this dance. You are spoiled with attention. Let me show some kindness to this handsome stranger."

"Handsome stranger! Ever since last Monday the girls of this town are all buying up half-broken Western horses and trying to make engagements with him to take them driving. Lucky devil!"

"Come, René," said Sally. "Don't mind him. He's jealous. Now then." And she swung René off into the dance.

"Not quite so stiff, young man. You are too proper. Remember, you haven't got a bag of bones to swing, but a live girl. Not so much backbone—loosen up. No! No! Not that way. Don't make me think you hate me. I'm not Nora, I know, but make me imagine for the moment that you are in love with me. Ah! That's better. Don't be afraid of me. Look at Hubert and Nora. You can see they are just lost to the world."

"Yes," replied René, "but——"

"But, oh, René don't be horrid. I can see you are quite angry. Forget Nora. Think of me. I know quite well you don't love me, but for heaven's sake make me think so. There! That's better. But—well—I mean—give me room to breathe. Easy! Easy! In the dance two individuals move as one you know. For the time you are my master and lord, but you must not bully me. Freedom, in perfect unity. There, now, you are thinking of me. Smoothly. Easily. Yield but control. That's it. Ah, if I had you for an hour to this music. But you see all the other girls would hate me."

"And the men," said René, "would be calling me out."

"And Nora would be quite savage with me."

"Not she, look at her," said René, and indeed Nora's ecstatic face gave no sign of anything but perfect enjoyment.

At the end of the dance Sally took René to a group of girls. "Oh girls! Think! This is his very first ball. And—well—you must have seen him."

"We did! We did!"

"And—he is so strong!"

"Oh! Oh! Sally, for shame!"

"Hush! I do not mean what you are thinking about. But just try him."

And they did, dance after dance, till Nora came to claim him.

"I just knew how it would be," she said, her lovely red lips pouting adorably. "Now I shall only have snatches of you."

"That will depend on you, Nora."

"We'll see! We'll see! But, dear boy, how you have improved. Ah, I see! Sally has been instructing you."

"She has indeed," said René. "She's a wonderful dancer. I feel

like a clodhopper beside her. She is a great dancer and a charming girl."

"I knew how it would be," said Nora with a sigh. "She is a far better dancer than I and a wonderful teacher."

"She is a wonderful teacher," replied René, "but for me I have no desire to change my own teacher. No one in this room can compare with you, Nora."

"As teacher?" said Nora glancing up into his eyes.

"No! Every way. You know well, Nora, that you are the loveliest thing in the room. Don't the men all tell you this? Doesn't Hubert?"

"Hubert?" Nora's eyebrows went up in surprise. "I don't know what to make of Hubert. I can't make out what's the matter with him. I don't think he is happy. But never mind Hubert. You were going to tell me something—remember, René?"

He glanced down at her. The light had somehow faded in her eyes. The spring had left her step.

"You are tired, Nora. Let us rest somewhere."

"You are a dear," she replied. "I think I am a little tired. Yes, let us sit somewhere. I know a quiet little corner." She led him to a guarded nook in the conservatory which had been in her mind ever since she had asked him to her ball.

"Now, tell me," she said, sinking down into a low chair. And René told her quietly of the little girl he had first met in the beech woods.

"Hubert's sister! But why so sad about it?" she asked.

Then René told her of Charlotte's family, of their high standing in the country, of their wealth and culture. Finally he told her of his last visit to Brookes Manor and of all that Charlotte's mother had been careful to tell him of her grand friends and her gay doings. "She is meeting lords and dukes and all that sort," he said bitterly, "and she thinks of me in buckskins as she saw me last."

"Buckskins!" exclaimed Nora hotly. "Buckskins!" Her hand pressed hard upon her heart. "What in heaven's name have buckskins to do with it? Tell me what she is like. Is she beautiful?"

"I don't know. I don't think she is beautiful. I never thought about that."

"Lucky girl," said Nora. "When have you heard from her?"

"I have never heard from her."

"And you have written her?"

"No. You see she was only a child when she left. It would not have been fair." René's voice was very low and very gentle. "Of course, she may forget me. She was only a child."

"Forget you, René?" Nora's voice was quivering with passion. "She will never forget you. She will not. How could she? You know she will not forget you."

"Perhaps not," replied René. "No, I don't think she will forget. But I must be fair to her. She has been living with very grand people and in very grand surroundings since I saw her. She may even be presented at Court before she comes home," he added in a voice of awe.

"As if that mattered," said Nora scornfully, and sat gazing into space, the fire in her eyes burning dim.

René too sat silent, busy with his memories.

The girl glanced at him. He had forgotten her. A bitter and unusual experience for her.

"Come," she said suddenly, "we must go back to them." Her voice was weary, her face pale.

René awoke from his reverie with a pang of self-reproach.

"Why, Nora, you look tired out. Why not rest a bit? This ball has given you a lot of trouble, and you are just played out with it."

"Yes, that's it," replied Nora with a great sigh. "That must be it." Her mind went swiftly over the past week. How eagerly she had looked forward to this night. She thought of her pride in him. What pains she had taken with his steps, with her own dress. How much she had hoped from the opportunities which the ball would bring. Now she faced the fact that all that new exhilarating joy of the past ten days had not been merely because of the ball. This young man had grown into her heart without her knowing it. Ever since that terrible experience with her runaway team he had lived in her thoughts and her dreams. Now she must banish him from both thoughts and dreams. This child held his heart, and well she knew that he was not one to change.

"I am tired, tired of everything," she said faintly.

His swift glance caught her quivering lips.

"Nora, tell me. Is it Hubert?"

The tender solicitude in his voice swept away the barriers of her control. "Hubert? No, no! Hubert has nothing to do with it."

"Can't I help?" he said.

"No!" she cried, starting to her feet. "No one can help! Not you! Not you! Let us go back at once."

His eyes were keenly searching her white face. "Nora, you must let me help you."

"No! Let us go back!" she exclaimed in growing passion and excitement.

He laid a detaining hand upon her arm.

With impulsive movement she turned to him, putting out her hands to him.

"You know I would do anything to help you, Nora. You are very, very dear to me. Can't you tell me?" His arms were about her.

"Ah! Don't! Don't. Not you," while she clung to him.

"Let me try to help you."

Her arms went up about his neck. She made a sudden resolve. "Oh, René! Dear, dear René—I am—going—away." Sobs were shaking her now. "Don't say another word to me! Please don't!" Her face was turned toward him. "You might," she whispered, "if you like, kiss me good-bye."

He bent and kissed her lips, she clinging desperately to him. "Now," she cried, "let us go! No, no more! I am a silly girl, a silly, silly girl. Look at me, René, can I go back like this? Will they notice anything? Let us walk about for a few moments. You dear, dear boy! You have helped me. Don't speak, come! And don't look so woebegone. Smile, laugh, be gay! Ah! here is my father. Now you must be gay. He has quick eyes."

Her father came rapidly toward her, gave her a sharp look.

"Why, Nora, where have you been?—And keeping this young hero from his admirers."

"I know, Father," she cried gayly, "but the only way I can get him to myself is to run away with him."

"Well, I want him right now, and your aunt is anxiously inquiring about you. There are young fellows clamoring out there like wolves. You'll surely be in trouble."

"Run away, Father. I'll bring him safely to you in a few moments. Oh, yes! You can trust me! Honor bright. I am going to have one more dance with René."

"Remember, child, ten minutes, no more."

"Fifteen will do, Father," she replied, clinging fast to René's arm. "Now, René," she said as they reëntered the ballroom, "let us dance. There's a lovely waltz going, and one last dance we must have, for I know Father will not let you escape."

"I'd rather take you where you can rest, Nora—you are tired. I can see you are tired."

"Tired?" she laughed gayly, "not a bit. I have hours of dancing in me yet. No, let us dance."

"All right, then, but afterwards I am going home."

"No, René, that will not do. Father wants you, and he would certainly suspect something. We will have this dance, and then you will go to him."

"No," said René. "If I have this dance with you, you must come and say good-bye where you met me to-night. You are going away South," he continued. "Perhaps I too may go South some day soon."

"Oh, where?" she cried, "where?"

"Through Virginia and the Carolinas and perhaps to Kentucky. I have not yet made my plans, but, vaguely, that is my program."

"Kentucky? That's my old home. But I am not sure that I am glad of that, René, for I shall only have to say good-bye to you again."

"But, Nora, we are going to be friends, friends forever. I have just discovered you. You know we do not make, we discover our best friends! And I am not going to let you go out of my life. Nothing can ever make me less your friend."

They had their dance. To Nora a few minutes of pure rapture as they circled among the throng about the room, exchanging smiles and gay repartee. When the music ceased she pushed him hurriedly from the room and led him to the anteroom where he had removed his cloak.

"René," her voice came breathlessly, "I must say good-bye. I must be quick."

"Good-bye, Nora," he said, putting his arms about her. "Will you remember always that I am your friend? And if you ever want a friend's help, will you let me know?—and I promise you that wherever I am and whatever doing nothing but my honor will keep me from you."

"I promise, René. I promise gladly and with all my heart. And now good-bye, good-bye. Oh, René! It is good-bye!" She was clinging to him. Her eyes were tearless but glowing with passionate love. "I don't care what you think of me." Her words came rushing. "You may think me bold and forward, but I don't care."

"I am going to kiss you, Nora," said René holding her closely to him. "You know, I am your friend."

"No! no! Not that. I cannot bear that!" she replied, her breath coming in dry sobs, her hands upon his breast, pushing him away from her.

"Friend!" she said woefully. "No, no, René." Then suddenly she grew very still, drew a long breath, lifted her head high. Her voice grew steady. "Yes, that is the word, René. Friend! Dear, dear friend. Yes, you may kiss me. Tell Charlotte that a Southern girl whom you saved from death, your dearest friend, kissed you good-bye." She reached up her arms and drew down his head and kissed him on the lips. "Good-bye," she whispered, "my friend, my best, my dearest friend."

Behind them a door opened quietly. A face looked in upon them and withdrew, but not before René had seen. It was Hubert's face and behind him another, pale, dark, fierce, and convulsed with hate, the face of Steele Gresham.

CHAPTER XXV

"CANADIANS, EH?"

After parting with Nora, René sat down to ponder the problem of her distress. He was sore at heart for her. All his sense of chivalry was aroused as he thought of her pale and tearful face. If he could only learn the cause, every power of body and mind would be enlisted for its removal. His helplessness enraged him. He was accustomed to bend things to his will. Some man was responsible. Who could it be? Hubert she had ruled out. Some other man was at the bottom of it. If he could only discover the man he would know what to do, but he was acquainted with so few within the circle of her friends.

Baffled, angry, he made up his mind to go home, but there was Colonel Danby. The colonel was waiting for him somewhere. Let him wait. He suspected that the colonel had planned some further "hero" demonstration. He was in no mood to accept hero worship. He was sick of it. He would escape and later send his apologies. He threw on his cloak, caught up his hat, and opened the door. What foul fiend had planned this? Coming down the hallway toward him was Colonel Danby.

"Ah, my young friend, a strategic retreat, I see."

René muttered some excuse. The colonel would hear none.

"What is it, Colonel?" inquired René desperately. "Is it any more of this hero business? I am sick of it."

"Some friends of mine desire to meet you, sir," replied the colonel, assuming his grandest air.

René at once surrendered, threw off his cloak, and followed the colonel meekly to Mr. Gerry's private rooms, where he found some score of men assembled, among them Hubert and Steele Gresham, with a butler and his assistants ministering to their varied thirsts.

"Come along, Danby!" cried Gerry. "Ah, I am glad to see you

have our young hero with you. Gentlemen, I have the honor to present to you our young friend from Canada, who, the other day, at the risk of his life, with great gallantry, saved my niece from a terrible death."

The men were all on their feet in a moment, raised high their glasses in René's honor, after which they proceeded each one to grip him with a warm clasp of the hand and a word of admiring appreciation. The ceremony finished, René found himself at Gerry's side, miserable, unhappy at the honor thus thrust upon him.

Colonel Danby, however, aware of his distress, came to his relief.

"Go on, Gerry," he cried, "let's hear what you have to say."

It soon became evident that the gathering was in the hands of Mr. Gerry. In a few words he propounded the purpose of the meeting which was nothing other than the wresting of the state of Massachusetts from the grip of the Federalist party in the coming election. The fight would center around two great offices, that of United States Senator and that of Governor of the State. In the last election Massachusetts had gone strongly Federalist. The city of Boston was hopelessly Federalist. The shipping interests, the commercial and financial and social circles were strongly pledged to that party. The strength of the Republicans lay in the rural constituencies and in the smaller towns.

The situation seemed hopeless, but Mr. Gerry had a plan, and his plan was such a reconstruction of the constituencies as would give the Federalist vote and give the Republican party a fighting chance to win. The scheme was so clever and so carefully covered up that only those holding the key could discover its true purport.

In the discussion that followed it was inevitable that the question of war with Great Britain should emerge.

"It is this damnable Right of Search that gets me," said a man, Mr. Saxby, sitting at Gerry's left. "Freeborn citizens of America can no longer sail the seas in American ships except by permission of England. Hundreds of American sailors have been dragged from American ships, taken to London, and tried in an English court—an English court! My God! Why, sir, only two

weeks ago my own nephew—the son of a revolutionary sailor!—sailed with Paul Jones!—as fine a young fellow as ever stepped on deck—was hauled out of his ship by a British officer—put in irons! Great God in heaven! An American boy—taken to London for trial!" The man's voice broke into raging sobs. "Is that right? I ask any fair-minded Britisher, is that right?" Promptly came the answer from René.

"The answer and the only answer is 'No! absolutely no!' "

The tense, pent-up fury stirred by Saxby's passionate tale found expression in a storm of cheers.

"I knew it! I knew it!" cried Gerry, enthusiastically patting René on the shoulder. "I can always spot a man when I see him."

"May I add something, sir?"

A score of voices answered, "Go right on, sir! Speak right out, sir!"

"This Right of Search for deserters," said René, speaking very quietly, "has been right or wrong, a law of the high seas for two hundred years. No single nation has the right to abrogate or modify that law. Only a tyrant like Napoleon would claim the right. My own idea is that the onus of proof should lie with the party making the arrest and the court should be an international court. I deeply sympathize with Mr. Saxby. His nephew has suffered an outrage, and unhappily there are many like him. That wrong should be put right."

"I knew it! By the livin' jiminy crickets!" shouted Gerry.

"He's a man!" On every side rose cries of approval. "And that's the opinion of all the Canadians, I believe. We'll never have to fight Canadians. Never! We'll treat them like brothers. If England wants to make war we'll fight her, by gad! But Canadians won't join up against us. No siree! That's my opinion."

René smiled quickly at him, shaking his head.

"Eh what?" demanded Gerry.

"Don't be an ass, Gerry!" said Colonel Danby. "I speak as a soldier and the son of a soldier. Do you imagine that the people of Canada, as proud as we are, loving their country as we love ours, would lie down and let a foreign army walk over them?"

"Thank you, Colonel," said René quietly.

"Canada fight? How many soldiers could Canada put in the

field? How many Canadians are there, anyway?" The speaker was Steele Gresham. His tone carried contempt.

At once there arose a storm of protesting cries.

"Don't answer him, sir!" said Colonel Danby. "The question affronts all."

"Thank you, sir," said René, again rising to his feet. "Perhaps you will excuse me. You are about to discuss affairs with which I am quite unfamiliar."

"You are perfectly welcome to remain," said Gerry, "but it is entirely as you prefer, sir." He followed René to the door.

"Come to my office to-morrow at noon. I have something to propose which I think will interest you."

Colonel Danby went out with him.

"You are coming to the party—my sister and Nora will be expecting you," he said.

René pleaded imperative work.

"Very well, my boy, duty first is a good motto. But one word, René, apropos of what has been said. Whatever may come, nothing can ever change our hearts to you."

"Thank you for that word, Colonel," said René. "Nothing can ever change my heart to you and yours."

The colonel accompanied him to the door. There they found both Hubert and Gresham apparently waiting for him. At the sight of Colonel Danby they drew aside.

"Good-night, Hubert," said René.

Hubert replied with a curt nod. Gresham ignored him, except for a look of black hate.

To him René paid little heed, but Hubert's curt acknowledgment of his good-night puzzled and distressed him. What had he said or done that should change Hubert's friendly relation to him? He remembered Hubert's face looking in upon his interview with Nora. "He is jealous, the fool," he said angrily to himself. "What difference does it make to him? What right has he to interfere? What about Hope? Has he forgotten all about her?"

Next morning, sitting in his office, the door opened sharply upon him and Hubert stood at his desk in obvious excitement, voice and hands trembling. He began without preliminary.

"I saw you last night, sir."

René made no pretense of ignorance of his meaning.

"I know," he replied.

"You were kissing Nora Danby."

"I was."

"May I ask, sir, what you mean by such a preposterous proceeding? I can hardly suppose," he added in a voice loaded with contempt, "that you mean to propose marriage to the young lady."

"No, I have neither the purpose nor the desire to propose marriage."

"Then, sir, you are a scoundrel! Take that!" His gloves came hard across the young man's face.

Slowly that face grew gray. Hubert drew off as if expecting attack, but there was no change in René's position. Slowly and with difficulty came his speech.

"I love another girl, and it is for the sake of that girl that I have not already knocked you down and for her sake I will not call you out to-morrow and kill you. I love your sister Charlotte."

Hubert stood paralyzed of speech and action.

"My sister—Charlotte!"

"And Nora knows it. She is absurdly grateful to me for what I did, and she is good enough to consider me her friend."

"Charlotte!" said Hubert again. "That child!"

"She will be eighteen in July."

"But, good Lord! Charlotte! And you propose to marry her? Great heaven!"

"That is her business. Meantime, I decline to discuss it with you or with any other."

"Except Nora, apparently." Hubert's tone was savagely sarcastic. "Meantime, you have stirred up a lot of trouble for yourself. Young Gresham is after you."

"Gresham? He is an impertinent fool."

"All the same, I may tell you that he means to call you to account."

"Is he a friend of yours?" René's voice was deadly cold.

"He is, and at this minute he is looking for you. He means to have you out. He is a Southerner, of one of the best Southern

families. He has known Nora since childhood and is in love with her."

"Keep him away from me, if he is a friend of yours." René's voice was like chilled steel. "Perhaps you don't know that my uncle was one of the best instructors in arms in the British army, and ever since childhood he has given me almost daily instruction. Let me tell you that I can kill Gresham with any weapon he can name or with my bare hands, and you too for that matter," he added with a sudden access of rage. "I can kill you, now, in this room, where you are."

René's white face and his voice, thick with rage, filled Hubert with uneasy fear. He remembered René's gun play in the Dickson-Weekes duel. Besides, his mind was profoundly affected by René's announcement in regard to his sister Charlotte.

"René," he said after a pause, "I am sorry. I am awfully sorry that I struck you. I didn't know about——"

"Don't speak of it now or ever. And keep away from me. And, for God's sake, keep your fool friend away."

"René! I apologize. I am profoundly sorry and ashamed." Impulsively Hubert held out his hand.

René would not see it.

"And as for Charlotte——"

"Stop it!" cried René. "I won't let you speak of Charlotte to me. You have no right! And I have no right!"

"Very well," replied Hubert, "be it so. As for Gresham——"

"Gresham? Listen to me. You bring your friend Gresham to Levac's Shooting Gallery at five o'clock this afternoon. I'll show him something that may change his mind. Now I'm in a hurry."

"René!" exclaimed Hubert, again stretching out his hand, "I want——"

"Oh, get out!" cried René, springing to his feet and pointing to the door. "I have stood all I can from you. Get away! For God's sake, get out of this room! Will you go?"

Without a word Hubert left him.

At five o'clock Levac's Parlors and Shooting Gallery were thronged with the young bloods of Boston engaged in various athletic exercises, boxing, wrestling, fancy pistol shooting, fencing, and the like. When Hubert and his friend Steele Gresham

entered the rooms René was finishing a fencing bout with Captain Eversham, the champion pupil of Monsieur Henri Levac. As Hubert and Gresham joined the circle about the fencers René called out with a laugh, "Look out, Eversham, I am coming for you."

"Come along, then!" replied Eversham. "I'm ready."

A feint, a thrust, a guard, then—one—two—three.

Eversham's foil with a clash struck the wall.

"You were not ready for me, Eversham," said René.

"Yes, I was, but, be gad, that is a new one to me."

"Mon Dieu!" cried Henri, "eet ees de *passe fameaux* of de great Martel hisself."

"From the great Martel himself my instructor had it," replied René. "He was Martel's great friend. Come on, Eversham, you were going to do some pistol work with me."

"I'm with you," replied Eversham, "but you must show me that *passe* of yours some day."

"Most surely I will," said René, moving off toward the shooting gallery.

Upon a long upholstered rest a number of loaded dueling pistols lay in readiness for those desirous of trying their skill at the targets provided. The shooting began with fixed targets, a comparatively easy test of skill at which both Eversham and René made excellent practice.

"Now, Henri," said René, "let us have some real shooting. Let's have a try at the birds."

"Oui, mos' certainlee, messieurs," cried Henri enthusiastically. "Dat ees de shoot, de mos' sublime!"

Six dueling pistols were laid upon the rest. At intervals of two seconds each six shining glass balls were released with a click from the trap.

"Go to it, Eversham," said René.

Eversham's score was three out of six.

René's six balls accounted for six flying balls. A second trial brought four balls to Eversham and again six to René.

"Try 'em at seconds, René," said Eversham, clapping his friend on the shoulder.

"All right, go on," said René.

Once more at an interval of one second each Eversham broke four balls out of six.

"Splendid, old chap! You are surely coming on," cried René, whose next try got him five out of the six.

"And now," cried Henri, "de shoot supreme."

Again a single pistol was laid upon the rest. Every man in the room crowded about in breathless expectation. This time Eversham stood with his back to the target. At the click of the trap he whirled about, picked up his pistol, and fired, but without result.

"Now, my boy," said Eversham, "show 'em what you can do."

This time six loaded pistols were laid upon the rest. The crowding onlookers stood in riveted attention. René carefully arranged the pistols to his liking, paused a few moments, took his place with his back to the target, and nodded to Henri. Six times in succession he whirled and fired and six times broke the flying balls.

"Hola! Embrassez moi!" shouted the excited Henri, as he rushed at René, grappled with him, and kissed him on both cheeks.

"Mais c'est magnifique! C'est superb!"

Enthusiastic cheering broke from the amazed company.

"By Jove! René, how long did you practise that sort of thing?"

"For five years almost daily, off and on. My uncle was a wonder. Let's go, Eversham."

Beside his friend Gresham stood Hubert.

"By Gad," said Hubert in a voice trembling with excitement, "and I insulted him this morning."

Gresham stood silent, his dark face pale with emotion.

"I am not ready to die yet," he muttered at length, "but some day——"

"Oh, rubbish, Gresham, better practise a few years before you talk of some day."

"I say," said Gresham turning upon his friend, "what was your purpose in bringing me here?"

"He told me to bring you," replied Hubert, "and, by Jove, he's a better man than either of us. He didn't want to kill you."

Gresham ground his teeth. "All the same, my day will come. I'd like to kill him."

"And to-day he spared your life, Gresham," replied Hubert. "You're a fool, and let me tell you, you kill him and you'll have to kill me too."

"Ah," replied Gresham with a sneer. "Canadians, eh! Well, some day, perhaps soon, and the sooner the better"; and with that he turned on his heel and left Hubert standing.

CHAPTER XXVI

A CAMPAIGN MANAGER

MEANTIME René was on his way to keep his appointment at Mr. Gerry's office. Arrived there, he found Mr. Gerry and Colonel Danby waiting him. Without preliminaries Gerry began.

"René," he said, "if I may so call you, I like you. I like your style. I like your way of looking at things. I think you are the kind of a man we want in this campaign. I want you for my private secretary, or rather a sort of managing director in my office."

"What campaign?"

"This Republican campaign which we practically launched last night. We want to dish the blankety-blank Federalists in this state, and, by the Great Horn Spoon, we're going to do it! You know I'm up for governor. I want somebody as secretary in whom I shall have absolute confidence, a man of honor who will keep his mouth shut. The salary is unimportant to me. I propose to start you at $200 a month, and in six months, if you prove the man I think you are, I shall double your salary or give you anything you like. My office staff will be at your disposal and, by the everlasting jiminy crickets, we'll drive these cursed Federalists from this State!"

For some moments René sat silent, his mind working at lightning speed.

"But, Mr. Gerry," he said at length, "the defeat of the Federalists would mean war with Great Britain. That is something I should greatly deplore."

"Why?" asked Mr. Gerry.

"Because I'm British and I'm Canadian."

"Ah! But surely you can see your interests lie with the United States?"

"My interests?"

"Your country's interests, and your personal interests, for

that matter, lie with the United States. You will go far in this country, young man, farther than at this moment you can possibly imagine. Danby and I have talked this matter over. You have rendered us, Colonel Danby and my family, a service which we can never fully repay, but we should like to have the opportunity to show our gratitude. My niece is very dear to me, and, well—we want you with us, that's all, and we pledge ourselves that we will take care of you."

Again René sat for some moments in silence.

"Think it over, René," said Colonel Danby earnestly.

"Yes," cried Gerry, "we have no desire to rush you. Take a few days, a week, if you like."

"Mr. Gerry," said René rising to his feet, "I hope you will believe me when I say that I am profoundly grateful for your offer, more grateful than I can say, but again let me remind you that I am a Canadian—a Britisher."

"Nothing can change you? Your friend Brookes is throwing in his lot with us. He too will do well in this country. You will do much better, go much farther."

"Mr. Gerry, Hubert must settle things for himself. Nothing can change me. In any other capacity I shall be only too glad to serve you, but not in this way. Not politically."

"René," said Colonel Danby earnestly, "I want you to take time and think it over."

"Thank you, Colonel Danby. Thank you, Mr. Gerry. I can say no more. Is that all?"

"That is all," said Gerry. "I am disappointed. Damnably disappointed. You are standing in your own light, young man. After all, what is Canada?" he added in a voice of contempt.

"Canada? My country, sir," replied René, standing a little straighter.

"Yes, but all the same a strip of frozen country, fit only for Indians and trappers. In a few months the United States will be in possession of it. Five hundred thousand of you. Eight millions of us. Great Britain fighting with her back against the wall, unable to help——"

"Yes, sir," interrupted René, "fighting for life, honor, and freedom, the world's freedom. Canada is with her and I am with

Canada. Again Mr. Gerry, Colonel Danby, let me thank you," and bowing to each René turned to leave the office.

"Wait a moment," said Colonel Danby. "What of that fur business, Gerry, we were speaking of some time ago? René doesn't want to mix in this political business, and, by Jove, I'm a soldier and understand how he feels about it. But he knows furs. We need a man for that Southwest country. Why not send René South?"

"All right, Danby," replied Gerry indifferently. "Frankly, I tell you I am disappointed, but go ahead, state your plans."

"René, Mr. Gerry and I were speaking about another matter some days ago. We want a man to visit the Indians in the South and West country to buy up their furs. Furs are dead. But we think we can handle them, and you would be valuable to us. Besides, René, we do want to do something for you." Colonel Danby's tone was that of a father.

"That's right, Danby," said Gerry heartily, "we want to do something for him. He can have the job if he wants it."

At some length Colonel Danby expounded his proposition. Briefly it was that the company needed a man whom they could trust to gather up the furs now stored in the hands of the Indians in the Western country lying between Kentucky and the Canadian boundary. They were convinced that the furs could be purchased for a song from the Indians who had no other opportunity of trade.

"What of your embargo?" inquired René.

Gerry condemned the embargo in picturesquely sulphurous language.

"Gentlemen," said René, "the embargo is your business and not mine. I agree with you that it has been a foolish business from first to last, but as a Canadian I cannot undertake to break the laws of your country. I say," he exclaimed suddenly, "let me make you a proposition. Let me buy your merchandise of you, and let me take my chance with the Indians. I shall buy their furs with the proviso that they deliver them as best they can in Canada. The Indians are neither your subjects nor your allies."

Mr. Gerry smiled. "Do you know what you are talking about?"

he inquired. "Two years ago we bought one hundred thousand dollars' worth of furs from those Western Indians. Can you put up one hundred thousand dollars?"

"No," replied René. "But furs worth one hundred thousand dollars two years ago can be bought for much less to-day."

Colonel Danby laughed aloud. "He's got you, Gerry. Those Indians are desperate to sell. Their furs can be got for a quarter of that sum. Besides, the Indians have no such stock of furs this year."

"Right you are," replied Gerry. "For a few kegs of whisky and a few hundred rifles we could get the lot and ship them through western Canada."

"Rifles to Indians!" exclaimed René. "Why, they're fighting your people down there."

"Oh, I'm aware of that, but I'm not afraid of those devils. We can clean them out any time we want," said Gerry with a laugh. "By the Great Horn Spoon, Danby, there's something in this."

"Mr. Gerry," said René, "I shall trade neither whisky nor rifles to the Indians."

"He's right," said Colonel Danby. "We cannot trade rifles to these Indians. My people in Kentucky are hard pressed as it is with these devils. No rifles for them."

Again Gerry laughed aloud. "Right once more. But, as I say, business is business, although it makes me laugh to hear a Canadian scruple to trade rifles to the Indians."

"Mr. Gerry," replied René indignantly. "I have the documents to show from our government and from our commander-in-chief distinctly forbidding all trade in rifles with the Indians. The instructions are definite and final. But, as I say, I am ready to buy merchandise from you delivered by your agents where I want it on the western frontier. I shall do my trading with the Indians. They will deliver their furs at a convenient point which I will name."

The two Americans looked at each other in silence while René waited.

"I say," said Gerry at length, "he's got a head on him, and, by the Great Horn Spoon, I believe he can put it through. But what

capital have you, young man, suppose you buy our merchandise and do your own trading? Suppose we undertake to deliver our goods through our agents where you want them, can you put up the necessary capital—at the very least thirty or forty thousand dollars?"

"I do not believe I shall require so much," replied René. "Give me twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of goods and I'll make the trade. You allow me three months'—no, four months' credit. I shall send you the cash."

Again Gerry laughed aloud. "Danby, this is the man for us. It is an absurd proposition from beginning to end. We are invited to sell twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of goods, and we have nothing but this boy's word for it, but I'll be gee-whizzly-gol-dusted to a cinder if I don't feel like taking him up."

"I'm with you, Gerry," said Colonel Danby quietly.

"Yes," continued Gerry. "This young man, unless some Indian takes his scalp, will trade his merchandise and get fifty thousand dollars' worth of furs."

René smiled. "If so, Mr. Gerry, I shall be glad to give you ten per cent. on everything on the sales price over thirty thousand dollars." They spent an hour together talking over the details of the proposition, after which René went his way. He had letters to write that night.

Within two weeks two letters reached Mr. Robert Hamilton in Queenstown, Canada. He read them over with mingled feelings. "Twenty-five thousand dollars. The young deevil's no blate!" he said to himself looking at one of the letters which he held in his hand. He read the letter again with greater care. "Man, though! There is a chance. He kens furs and he kens Indians and he's made many friends among them. My certie! He might just mak' it! There's a chance! Ay! There's a chance!" A long time he pondered over the letter, a light growing in his eyes. "They'll get their percentum, but the lad will mak' a killing. I'll dae it! I'll dae it! It's chancy! It's gey chancy! But he'll diddle thae Americans. He'll mak' a clean twenty-five thousand dollars. Thae furs will be had for the askin'. What else? Yon Indians are in a cleft wi' their furs. They hae nae buyers. They hae nae buyers. They'll jump at him. By gosh! I'll dae it!"

He seized a pen, spread the second letter before him, and read it carefully. His eye fell upon the postscript of the first letter.

Tell Black Hawk to bring Wahcheeka to meet me at the Red Rock where the Scioto joins the Ohio on the first day of May. They are to wait there three days for me. After that they may return.

He glanced at the calendar. That was just three weeks off. He put his head out of his office door.

"Mr. Adam," he called, "this way, please."

Mr. Adam appeared at once. From his tone something was "gruppin" the maister.

"Mr. Adam, you know the young Mohawk chief who accompanied René on his last trip. Black Hawk is the name. Get him for me with all dispatch."

"I'm danged busy just now."

"Mr. Adam! Mr. Adam! At once, please. It must be attended to at once. Send someone post haste! You understand?"

"Ay, I understand. But——"

"Mr. Adam! Mr. Adam!" Mr. Hamilton's tone forbade parley.

"Yes, sir, yes, sir. At once," said Mr. Adam and went out muttering to himself. "Now whaur's yon slitherin' deevil? McCloy!" he shouted. "McCloy! Whaur is yon limb o' Satan? McCloy, I say! Ah! There ye are! Come here, ye limb!"

McCloy approached cautiously.

"Whaur hae ye been, ye gowk? Ye're ordered to gae till the Mohawk Reserve and find yon savage, Black Hawk by name, and bring him here wi' ye wi'out•delay."

McCloy turned on his heel without a word.

"Stop, ye gomeril! Whaur d'ye think ye're gaein'?"

"Tae fetch yon savage buddie, Black Hawk by name."

"Ay," said Mr. Adam grudgingly, "ye're right—an' hark ye! Dinna be later than twal o'clock tae-morrow. I'll tak' a shilling off y'r pay for every hoor ye're late."

"An' pit a shilling on for every hoor I'm aheid?" asked McCloy.

"Na, na! A sixpence 'll dae. Aff wi' ye! The maister is ettlin' to see him."

"What aboot ma denner?" inquired McCloy. "An empty wame is bad for the win'."

"Denner!" roared Mr. Adam. "What's ailin' ye at a handfu' o' biscuits an' a gob o' cheese?"

"A-weel," said McCloy, cutting a slab from a cheese and filling his pockets with Hudson Bay biscuits.

He had hardly left the store when Mr. Hamilton again put his head out of his office.

"Mr. Adam, Mr. Adam!" he called.

Mr. Adam made a deliberate response.

"Have you dispatched a messenger for Black Hawk?"

"And wherefore no?" inquired Mr. Adam in an aggrieved tone. "Did ye no bid me?"

"And is he gone already?"

"Ay, sir, I understood there was haste in the matter."

Mr. Adam's tone was overweighted with pained surprise. "But if ye want him I perhaps can catch him before he has actually depairted."

"He is to tell Black Hawk that it is René that wants him."

Mr. Adams went out in great haste. He found McCloy putting on his saddle with deliberation.

"No awa' yet? It's jist as weel. Ye're to tell yon savage that it's the young lad René that wants him."

"That'll fetch him loupin' like a hare, I doot," said McCloy.

"Awa', then! He thinks ye're a mile awa'," said Mr. Adam.

"What he disna ken wunna harm him," said McCloy, mounting his horse.

In exactly three quarters of an hour McCloy returned and marched Black Hawk into Mr. Adam's presence.

"Here's y'r man. That'll be twal shillings and sevenpence ha'-penny," he said.

Mr. Adam looked at his watch, made a rapid calculation, and stood glaring helplessly at McCloy.

"Ye'll no be needin' yon cheese and biscuits," he said at length. McCloy took the cheese and biscuits from his pocket and laid them on the counter.

"Ye'll be addin' to the twal shillings an' seevenpence na'penny twa shillings for the mare's provender and one shilling sixpence

for my time. I'll say naethin' aboot the extra hoor an' a quarter."

Mr. Adam seized the package of cheese and biscuits, hurled it at McCloy's head, who dodged and escaped to the stable, while Mr. Adam brought Black Hawk into Mr. Hamilton's office.

"Here's y'r Indian, sir," he said briefly and departed.

"And where in the world did you find him?" called Mr. Hamilton after him.

"McCloy found him aboot the toon," said Mr. Adam gruffly and went off to his desk.

"Fine! Clever lad! Send McCloy to me."

"He's engaged, sir," said Mr. Adam.

"Mr. Adam! Mr. Adam! Send him to me at once," ordered Mr. Hamilton peremptorily.

When McCloy returned from his interview with Mr. Hamilton he paused at Mr. Adam's desk long enough to remark:

"I'll no charge ye for the provender, sir."

"Oot o' my sight, ye huxterin' deevil!" cried Mr. Adam, "or I'll brak y'r back tae ye."

McCloy vanished with speed.

Meantime Mr. Hamilton, having dispatched Black Hawk on his mission, resumed his consideration of the proposition in the letter before him.

"Ten per centum. Too much. They'd have taken five per centum if he'd offered it. He is a rash lad, but—eh—well, I'll dae it." He put his pen to paper, wrote and signed the letter, guaranteeing the purchase of twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of goods to be delivered to the order of his friend Mr. René La-Flamme at points agreed upon with the purchaser, and an additional ten per centum upon the sales price beyond thirty thousand dollars. He was careful to add, however, that he considered this commission unusually liberal under the circumstances and suggested that the rate should be not more than eight per centum. Indeed, five per centum would be fair. However, he knew he was dealing with gentlemen who would do the proper thing.

"Foxy old boy!" said Gerry to his friend Colonel Danby when he had read the letter, "but his guarantee is safe, and, by the Great Horn Spoon, I like the boy's nerve, and I feel like accepting the old boy's suggestion. Anyway, it is twenty-five thousand dollars

found money for us, Danby. Those goods were dead on our shelves."

"Make it eight per cent. Gerry," said Colonel Danby. "The boy has got, as you say, great nerve, and it was his nerve that saved my girl. Personally I'll make up the difference."

But Gerry consigned him and his suggestion to perdition. "Whose girl was it he saved, anyway?" he cried in a choking voice. "I guess I've got some interest in that young lady. I only wish to God we could tie the young devil down to this country, Danby. If only Nora—— Well—she knows her own mind. But, Danby, that boy won't listen to anything less than ten per cent., if I know him."

"Well, well," replied Danby, "we can easily make it up to him on the price of the goods, eh?"

"That we can," said Gerry. "You look after that, Danby," and this Danby was careful to do.

CHAPTER XXVII

GENTLEMEN TRADERS

Before the four months set by René for the payment of goods furnished by Mr. Gerry and Colonel Danby had expired there lay upon Mr. Robert Hamilton's desk a check for twenty-five thousand dollars signed by Mr. Robert Hamilton in favor of the American Fur & Lumber Company, and in addition a check for six hundred and eighty-seven and a half dollars signed by Mr. Robert Hamilton, also in favor of the American Fur & Lumber Company, the latter being ten per cent. of the surplus received from the sale of the furs delivered to Mr. Robert Hamilton in Queenstown, Upper Canada.

In Mr. Robert Hamilton's office, sitting across the table from him, were Mr. Gerry and Colonel Danby.

"Well, the lad has made a killing," said Mr. Hamilton, as he passed the two checks over to Mr. Gerry.

Mr. Gerry glanced at the larger check.

"Do I understand this to be the proceeds of the sale of furs by the young man?"

"In part, Mr. Gerry, only in part. It represents the amount due you for goods delivered to the young man for trading with the Indians, and very handsome it was of you, too."

"Oh, I don't know about that. You see we knew the young chap, but we also had the guarantee of Mr. Robert Hamilton, backing him up. But, really, this is quite an astonishing transaction. I knew we were taking a big chance, and I was prepared for a fifty per cent. loss, but even a fifty per cent. loss would have been a gain to us, for the goods were dead upon our shelves. That there should have been so large a profit I never dreamed. Great bit of work, eh, Danby?"

"Astonishing, perfectly astonishing!" said Colonel Danby.

"Yes, it's not so bad," replied Mr. Hamilton, "and he dealt fairly by the Indians, too. Their furs were a dead loss. They fairly forced them upon René. I mean, he made his selection of only first-class pelts. Then they forced the rest upon him at any price he cared to name, but the lad was fair by them, and he can go back to-morrow and deal with them again. He has left hosts of friends among the Indians of the Ohio, the Scioto, the Miami, and the Wabash. It was a near thing, though," continued Mr. Hamilton with a chuckle; "man, it was a near thing."

"What do you mean?" asked Colonel Danby. "Near to what?"

"Near to a total and complete and irreparable loss," exclaimed Mr. Hamilton. "But he diddled them. Eh! he diddled them," he continued, slapping his thigh and dropping into the Doric.

"Mr. Hamilton," said Mr. Gerry, "there's apparently a story behind that laugh of yours, and it belongs to us."

"Well, it'll do nobody any harm now, I suppose. At least, I believe I can trust you gentlemen. You see that embargo of yours is rather hampering to trade. Hence it was that the lad agreed to purchase the goods outright from you and to sell them to the Indians on the understanding that they deliver the goods at any point named by him. The lad named Amherstburg, Upper Canada. The Indians were glad to accept the condition. Neither they nor anybody else for that matter believed them to be bound by the embargo. The first assembly point, however, was near the mouth of the Miami, that is Shawnee country, Tecumseh's country, you know. The furs were placed in charge of some Wyandot friends whom the lad could trust. There the Wyandots were met by some twenty-five or so of Mohawks from the Grand River. Everything was kept very secret, but there was a leak. Somehow, Harrison's men—there was a bunch of them you know—gathered about that new fort, Fort Harrison, I think it is called. What they were doing there I don't know, but I gather it means no good to Tecumseh and his Indian confederacy. Well, at any rate, with a lot of Indians coming and going, and a lot of soldiers trapesing through the woods, the news came to the ears of Harrison's men. A young captain from Kentucky—Graham, was it? No, that is a Scot's name, and he was no Scotsman. Not Graham—Grantham, or something like that. I got it from a half-breed chap, a

friend of Black Hawk—Black Hawk, you know, is a Mohawk chief up the Grand River here, a friend of René's——"

"It isn't Gresham, by any chance, is it?" inquired Danby.

"Gresham? Gresham? Ay! That's the chap, and a—— By the way, he's no friend of either of you gentlemen, is he?"

"Friend?" replied Danby. "Well, I know him. Let it go at that. I had a letter from my daughter about him and his doings in connection with René that rather disquieted me. Go on, Mr. Hamilton."

"Well, this Gresham got word of the big fur consignment. How, I don't know."

"Well, I guess we could enlighten you a bit on that. The skunk!"

"Skunks? Yes, that's the word. We have evidence that Gresham knew perfectly well the character of the arrangement, but whether he expected to make a killing for himself, or whatever was his notion, my man appears one day with a company of Kentucky men armed with rifles. They surround René's encampment and in the name of the United States government demand the goods. Goods belonging to the Indians, mind you. Not yet sold, and even if they were sold, sold to free traders, but the lad was ready for them. There was a big fire burning in the encampment and an awful stink. Some half dozen Indians were poking the fire with long poles, and a half dozen more, rifle in hand, were guarding some tepees near by.

" 'We want your furs,' says the captain. It was a miserable and woebegone lad that advanced to meet him. At a distance from the captain he halts.

" 'Take the furs if you want them,' he said. 'You see that fire? That's furs. You see those tepees? My men are down sick. Have you a doctor with you?'

" 'No, we have no doctor.'

" 'Have you ever seen smallpox, any of you?'

" 'Smallpox?' Man! The word scattered them.

" 'Yes, smallpox among Indians. I wish you would come and look at these men,' implored the lad.

"Man! man! there was a scatteration of soldiers, and would

they come near? Not one of them. Indeed, they threatened to shoot anyone that approached them from the infected camp.

"'Will you please send your doctor down with some medicines?'

"'What about yourself coming for them?' says a subaltern.

"'I'll come willingly,' says the lad, 'but I can't be sure of the infection.'

"'No, no! For God's sake, keep away!' says the captain. 'We'll send you a doctor.' And the company of Kentucky riflemen retired in quick order. But no doctor ever came near that camp. Medicines and food were left at a safe distance, but for ten days, all day and all night, those terrible fires were kept burning and their terrible stink rose to heaven." Here Mr. Hamilton's laughter became uncontrollable.

"What happened to the furs?" inquired Danby. "Were they burned?"

"Ay, they were burned," laughed Hamilton. "Some old rotten furs, culled out from the consignment, wrapped round skunk cabbage and rotten leaves and old tepee skins and anything that would make a fine and bonnie stink. Every day the Indians kept poking the fires, and every now and then an Indian funeral would be held, till there was a row of graves twenty yards long beside the camp. At last the camp broke up, the last bundle of furs consumed, the last grave filled in. From a distance a group of soldiers observed a straggling band of Indians, after burning their tepees and all their belongings, march off, a miserable and weakly procession clothed in new blankets furnished by the soldiers. The greatest care in regard to disinfecting the camp was taken by the doctor, I believe."

"By jingo! What a hoax!" exclaimed Gerry.

"Man, he diddled them!" cried Hamilton, wiping away his tears.

"But the consignment—were the furs all——?"

"Oh, come, Danby!" exclaimed Gerry, "can't you get it through your head?"

"The consignment?" replied Mr. Hamilton. "Oh, the consignment was safely in the hands of Black Hawk and his band of Mohawks, a couple of hundred miles away on the road to Queens-

town, while the soldiers, fearful of smallpox infection, were looking on with pity or with glee at the furs burning, according to the nature of them, and Captain Gresham biting his nails with disappointment at the loss of the haul he had expected to make. And, man! man! It was a gey fine ploy altogether! He made a killing, the lad! He made a killing! If we get yon furs to Amsterdam—and there's little doubt that the British Fleet will see to that—and if the market holds, there's between thirty and forty thousand dollars' worth of furs there at this very moment in my warehouse."

"Well, I'll be gee-whizzly-gol-dusted-to-Jude! What a sell! What a sell!" said Mr. Gerry.

He leaned across the table and shook hands with Mr. Hamilton.

"Serves that infernal skunk right," said Danby. "Gresham, I mean. He had a grudge against René, and he was trying to pay him out. I only found that out lately from my daughter. He's a dirty cur."

"Where's the boy, Mr. Hamilton?" inquired Gerry. "I want to see him."

"Oh, he's off up into the Mohawk country. There's a great powwow of Indians going on, Shawnees and Wyandots and Pottawattomies and the like, from across the line, along with our own Indians. The whole country is ringing with the exploit, and there's a great division of spoils in addition to the price paid for the furs. He'll be back in a couple of days or so. And there's your per centum, Mr. Gerry," said Mr. Hamilton, pushing the second check across the table toward that gentleman.

Gerry lifted the check. Six hundred and eighty-seven dollars and fifty cents. "And this is what?"

"Your per centum on the surplus over thirty thousand dollars, according to the agreement with the young man."

"Want it, Danby?" inquired Gerry, holding the check in the points of his fingers toward that gentleman.

Danby shook his head.

Gerry slowly rolled up the check in the form of a pipe spill, took a fresh cigar from his pocket, lighted the check and proceeded to use it to light his cigar.

"Now, Mr. Hamilton, if you or anyone else offers me such a check again I shall consider it a personal insult."

"Thank you, sir, thank you, sir," replied Mr. Hamilton, coming around to Gerry and offering his hand. "It is a pleasure to do business with gentlemen like you. And now Mrs. Hamilton will be keeping the dinner waiting us, and if there is one thing she dislikes more than another it is having her dinner spoiled by waiting."

"Your gracious lady, Mr. Hamilton, is more than kind," replied Colonel Danby. "I had heard in my own country of the hospitality of Mr. Hamilton's palatial home at Queenstown, but nothing that I had heard, sir, has done it justice."

"I am with you in that," said Mr. Gerry.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE GENERAL'S BALL

Among the many problems that arose from day to day to vex the soul of the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada was that of the loyalty of the tribes of the Six Nations settled upon the Thames and the Grand River. During the life of the Great Chieftain of the Six Nations, Joseph Brant, the loyalty of the tribes was unquestioned, but after the death of that great Indian statesman and war chief the control of the Indians fell into weaker hands. Discipline became lax. Emissaries from the American Senecas across the Lake, among them the distinguished chiefs Red Jacket and Cornplanter, were continually paying visits to their brethren in Canada and with consummate skill were exploiting the grievances which the Indians from time to time were forced to suffer at the hands of unscrupulous traders and inefficient government agents. The efforts of the emissaries were so successful that at a recent council of the tribes a resolution was passed that in the event of war with the United States the Indians should remain neutral.

Anxious to secure the latest and most authentic information in regard to the state of feeling among the Indians upon the Grand River, the general paid a visit to Mr. Robert Hamilton at Queenstown at his store. It was the day following the transaction between Mr. Hamilton and his American visitors from Boston.

"Where is that young trader of yours?" asked the general of Mr. Hamilton impatiently.

"That trader of mine, General? You mean that young runner of yours. He's a long sight more your runner than my trader."

"By the way," inquired the general, "how has the trade come out?"

Mr. Hamilton gave him the details of René's trading. The general was delighted.

"You don't tell me he stands to make from one to four thousand pounds? Amazing!"

"The boy considers that he was acting merely as my agent and in your employ. But we shall have to talk about that."

"Most assuredly. He deserves every penny for himself."

"Yes. He took a chance—and besides, it was a near thing." And Mr. Hamilton went off into a series of chuckles and forthwith related the full tale of René's trading. The general was highly amused.

"Oh, extremely clever. I was not mistaken in that young man. Send him along to me to-morrow night. Ah! Wait a moment! Let me see—ah, yes—my little social function happens to-morrow night. But never mind—send him along—say nothing about it—send him along."

In the late afternoon following René appeared at Mr. Hamilton's office, travel-stained, unkempt, unshorn, his buckskins showing the marks of the trail. From Mr. Hamilton he received a great welcome. Two hours they spent over their accounts, after which Mr. Hamilton delivered the general's command.

"To-night!" exclaimed René, glancing down at his buckskins. "All right, sir, I'll be there."

"Ye can brush up a bit? Ye're duds, I mean?"

"I have another suit—almost new," said René doubtfully.

"Fine. And get your hair trimmed a bit. McCloy is gude at the shears."

General Brock's ball was on a scale of quite unparalleled magnificence. The list of guests included not only the government officials, the civil list, the judiciary, the military, the clergy, but all people of consequence in the Niagara district, traders and farmers and the like. The ball was indeed only another diplomatic move in the general's scheme for the unifying of all classes in the community into an effective instrument of defence in the event of war.

At nine o'clock, the hour set, René rang the clanging bell of Navy Hall. Immediately the door was opened by a footman in livery.

"Go to the back door," gruffly said the flunkey, closing the door. But René's foot intervened.

"General Brock wishes to see me," he said in a clear voice. Immediately from behind the footman an aide-de-camp appeared.

"Come in this way, sir," he said. "The general is expecting you."

Through a brilliantly lighted hall he led his visitor. As René, amazed and abashed, hurried through the hall, he was confusedly aware of gleaming shoulders, of beautiful women and brilliant figures of uniformed men. He was brought to the general's office.

"Please sit down," said the aide. "I shall inform the general of your arrival."

Almost immediately the general appeared.

"Ah! my dear René! Delighted to see you. Heard all about you from Mr. Hamilton. Splendid achievement! And a great financial success too, I understand. I congratulate you!"

"I acted as Mr. Hamilton's agent and in your employ. Of course, I shall expect merely my wages, sir."

"Nonsense. You will get your wages, of course, but we shall see about the rest. Meantime, my boy, in a word, what is your general impression of the feeling over there? Is it serious? Is it—in short—is it war?"

"It is war, sir. I can only confirm what I said in my letters. I am convinced it is war!" Deliberately, slowly the words fell from his lips.

"So be it! God defend the right!" replied the general with equal solemnity. "Your report will follow?"

"Yes, sir. To-morrow. I really have not had the time——"

"Quite all right—to-morrow night—ah—you will dine with me and let me have the report in full. But now give me a brief statement of your reasons for your opinion."

"How many minutes, sir? You have——"

"Fifteen minutes just now must do. I must know the gist of it," said the general briskly.

Fifteen minutes, half an hour, and still René talked on, interrupted now and again by a sharp question. In the midst of the conversation a tap came on the door. The aide appeared.

"Mrs. Murray, sir, suggests——"

"Certainly, certainly. Say to Mrs. Murray I shall be with her in a very few minutes." He turned to René. "You will remain."

René glanced down at his buckskins in dismay. "Perfectly right—nothing could be better. Let me see. You have been studying during the year in Boston—so much is known. You have just returned from a trading trip throughout the West for an American firm—you understand? Purely business—the country is full of sedition. Traitors are under this roof to-night. Guard your words, but speak freely as to the war sentiment across the line. You get me?"

"But, sir, I am afraid——"

"Afraid, sir? Afraid?" the general sprang to his feet. "No man that serves me must ever use that word. You are nothing! I am nothing! Our country, sir, is all!"

His voice rang out like a trumpet; his eyes were flashing light.

"We shall meet these traitors. We shall defeat them, overwhelm them." René rose and faced him.

"I am not afraid of them, sir," he said firmly, "only of myself."

"That is the one fear we must banish from our souls. God knows we have ample ground for that fear. But never must we yield to that fear. Our country, our duty—with God the rest." But his voice grew calm again. "You understand me, boy?"

"Yes, sir, I will do what I can," said René quietly.

"I know it, sir, I know it. Afraid of the ladies?" He laughed aloud. "Ah, that is quite another thing. That too I understand. But your garb is what I would have chosen for you. Come with me."

The blaze of lights blinded René as he entered the ballroom at the general's side. At the moment partners were forming up for a cotillion. The lively chatter of voices suddenly ceased as the tall form of the general appeared in the ballroom.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I present to you my young friend Mr. René LaFlamme. He has just arrived, as you see from the woods, from the camp and the trail."

In the hush that followed all eyes were turned upon the slender figure in buckskins standing beside the general, overtopped by

the general by half a head. His close-fitting garb set forth the fine lines of his athletic form. Erect he stood, with head held high. The haughty challenging look in his black eye was but a cover for the trepidation in his heart.

As his eyes swept the room a swift change came to his face. Surprise, wonder, joy, a kind of fear, in succession were there. Rigid he stood, his eyes resting upon the figure of a young girl standing across the room from him. Exquisitely gowned in a soft white shimmering silk she stood, the loveliest thing in the room, her small proud head carried high upon a daintily turned pearl-circled neck, her face ivory except for the scarlet lines of two curving lips. With hand lifted to her breast, one little foot peeping out from beneath her gown, her dark eyes wide open, her curving lips slightly parted, she stood as if held in midstep by some startling sight or sound. Thus held for one single instant she remained; then, as if moving in a dream, a look of radiant gladness upon her lovely face, the girl left her partner and moved slowly forward. At her first movement René took one swift step to meet her with hand outstretched. With quick running feet she closed the space between them and put her hands in his.

"René!" she breathed. "Is it you? And—and—" with a little gasp—"in buckskins." A little gurgling laugh of sheer joy rippled through her parted lips. "You remember?"

"Remember? Could I forget?" His voice, low, thrilling, reached her ear alone.

For one instant they remained with hands clasped, all eyes fixed curiously upon them. Suddenly the girl became aware of the curious, staring eyes. Instantly a flood of crimson overspread the ivory face, neck, and shoulders.

With a slight bow René offered her his arm and whispered, "Steady, Charlotte." With slow and easy grace he conducted her to her partner, bowed, and returned to his place beside the general.

"Ah-ha!" cried the general gayly. "I see I have no need to introduce our young friend to the belle of the ball. And where, pray, did you meet this young lady, sir?"

"One September afternoon some three and a half years ago I found her and her companion lost in the beech woods, sir,"

replied René, bowing first to Charlotte and then to the general, "but not arrayed as she is at this present moment."

A ripple of laughter ran over the company.

"Vastly clever of him, eh, Mrs. Murray?" said a man in a colonel's uniform. "Amazingly apt!"

"Superb, I call it," replied the lady opposite him, the beautiful wife of the colonel of the One Hundredth Regiment. "He is a perfect darling. Take me to him at once, Colonel. Never mind this silly old cotillion, it is breaking up anyway. Aren't they both darlings? Let us have a look at that boy at close quarters. I confess, the more I see him the more he excites my interest and admiration. Did you see how he bore himself in that crowd? In his buckskins, too? What poise! What aplomb!"

"Who the devil is he, anyway?" replied the colonel. "Does anyone know?"

"Does it matter, Colonel?" said Mrs. Murray. "You can see he is a gentleman, and of the old school, too, I vow. One doesn't ask any more who is anyone. Indeed, in this colony and in these leveling days one is only too delighted to meet with a gentleman."

"Ah, Susan!" she continued turning to meet a tall, beautiful girl approaching here. "Do you happen to know this fascinating young man?"

"The general has just presented me, and it was indeed a presentation. He has quite the grand manner."

"Has he not? And where did he get it?"

"The general tells me his father was a French officer, but he died when this boy was a mere lad. His mother was of good Highland family. He has been brought up by an uncle, a sergeant major in the Forty-second."

"Ah! blood and breeding, eh?" said Mrs. Murray. "There he is now with a space about him. Do come and introduce me before he is engulfed again."

Eagerly the two ladies went off together. The colonel followed, growling in his moustache. "The young cub is receiving altogether too much attention."

"I see you know my dear young friend Miss Brookes," said Mrs. Murray after the introduction had been made.

"I have the honor," said René. His manner, however, closed that avenue.

"You have just returned from the United States?" inquired Susan.

"I have spent some eight months there, for the most part in Boston."

"And how do you like the damned Yankees?" inquired the colonel gruffly.

"I like the others better," replied René quietly.

"Eh, what! What do you mean?" sputtered the colonel.

Mrs. Murray laughed.

"I agree. I have found many charming people in New York, and if we knew them better——"

"And if they knew us Britishers better," interposed Susan.

"Yes, and if we were both a little fairer minded and a little more tolerant of each other," said René, "there would be no trouble between us, no fear of war."

"That's the talk, young man!" came a loud, self-assured voice behind them. "If Britain didn't try to bully the whole world, and especially the smaller nations, there would be friendlier feelings all round and no talk of war with our neighbors."

René turned slowly toward the speaker.

"Oh, good-evening, Mr. Willcocks," he said politely. "I'm sorry I do not quite get you. I do not remember any instance of Great Britain bullying other nations, great or small, during the last hundred years or so. Of course, the American Revolution may be in your mind, but America was not a nation till after the Revolution. Or perhaps you are thinking of the Orders in Council establishing a blockade around the French Empire. The bully there, however, the whole world will agree, was Napoleon, whose Berlin Decrees furnished as fine an example of bullying as the world has ever seen. It is pretty generally agreed that the Orders in Council were merely retaliation by a nation that had undertaken to champion the cause of some half dozen weaker nations against the world's most spectacular bully."

A little murmur of applause followed René's words.

"What, then, about this Right of Search?" exclaimed Mr. Willcocks in a loud voice. "What about the hundreds of American

citzens dragged from American ships and hauled to trial in London? Even Napoleon never did that."

"No," said René quietly. "Napoleon only sank American ships, officers, crew, and cargo, without warning or trial of any sort. But I apologize. I'm afraid I'm making a speech."

"Do go on, Mr. LaFlamme," cried Susan.

"Yes, go on," said Mr. Willcocks. "Perhaps you are prepared to justify that infamous Right of Search which the best British jurists are now condemning. How do you justify that Right of Search?"

René hesitated a few moments. Then, remembering the general's instructions, he proceeded.

"I am no authority upon international law, Mr. Willcocks. Personally I do not hold with the Right of Search as a wise bit of international legislation. But you know much better than I do that the Law of Search is a very old law and has governed all the sailing peoples of the world for the last two hundred—or is it three hundred?—years. It should have been modified or repealed by international agreement long ago. Unfortunately, however, it has not been repealed. Very many people of both nations, and I am one of them, wish it had been repealed, but Britain cannot repeal old laws for the world nor impose new laws upon the world; nor can any single nation, not even America. England is strictly within her legal rights. The law is bad, but England is not to be blamed for the law. But I apologize Mr. Willcocks for presuming to discuss this matter with you."

"That's all right, young man. That's all right," said Mr. Willcocks, for the moment nonplussed by René's answer and mollified by his modest manner. "There's a mighty lot of sound common sense in what you say. I wish there were more like you in this country," he added, moving away from the company.

"Oh, Mr. LaFlamme," exclaimed Mrs. Murray, "you have put that explanation well, has he not, Colonel?"

"Gad!" exclaimed the colonel, "never heard it better done myself."

"But we are forgetting that we are at a ball," cried Mrs. Murray. "Ah! General, we have become shamefully political, have we not?"

"I heard the young chap," said the general, "and I let him go on. I confess he has put the case with great skill. You agree, Miss Shaw?" he added, turning to Susan.

"Most certainly I do," replied the girl in a low voice. "That horrid man was just pluming himself for a regular oratorical flight, but Mr. LaFlamme trimmed his wings for him, and all so good-naturedly. Awfully clever. But who is this?" she continued turning sharply about, "and why so fashionably late?"

It was the Honorable Eustace, glorious in his Guards' uniform, bowing low before the general.

"Just arrived, Your Excellency. Detained by duty, sir."

"Ah, Burton," said the general. "Everything all right?"

"All right, sir. Your humble servant, Miss Susan; and yours Mrs. Murray, and, for heaven's sake, who is that? Not young René?"

"Ah, you know him? Of course, I remember now," said the general. "Yes, go and speak to him."

"What an extraordinary young man!" said Mrs. Murray to the general. "All the nice people seem to know him and to fall down before him. Here is another, if I am not much mistaken. Oh, Mrs. Brookes, don't tell me you too have come to do obeisance to this young protégé of the general. But of course you have known him for years."

"Yes, indeed, we have known René for years, and we are so glad to see him again." Mrs. Brookes's face was alight with joy.

"Mrs. Brookes!" cried René, hearing her voice and turning to greet her. "I am so delighted to see you again. I have so much to tell you."

"General, I am going to ask you to allow me to take this young man away with me. I am shocked to hear that he has actually been talking politics at your ball."

"He might do worse, Mrs. Brookes," said the general. "He might have been talking much more dangerous things to these charming ladies here, and then what would happen to him?"

"To us, General!" said Mrs. Murray.

"Come, René," said Mrs. Brookes, taking his arm. "I suppose you will be wanting to dance, but you will not be refusing to give a few minutes to an old lady."

"Old lady! I see none, Mrs. Brookes," replied René gallantly, as he went off with her.

"That boy, General, has been studying more than law in Boston," said Mrs. Murray.

"Evidently, evidently. And he might do worse."

"René," said Mrs. Brookes, as they moved apart from the company, "forgive me for taking you away from those charming people. Mrs. Murray is the most delightful woman in the colony. She has done so much for us all here. I am sorry to have carried you off, but I cannot wait. I must hear about Hubert. Besides, you will want to see Charlotte soon."

"Mrs. Brookes, more than anything else in the world," said René earnestly.

Mrs. Brookes sighed deeply. "Let us find a quiet corner," she said. "I know. Come in here." She led him into a large orderly room which for the night had been transformed into a conservatory.

"Let us sit here, René. Now, tell me, oh, tell me about Hubert. We are hearing so many rather sad things about him. And his letters to the papers have been so difficult to understand."

"Mrs. Brookes, you have no reason to be anything but proud of Hubert. He has won a fine position for himself in his firm and is greatly liked by the very best people in Boston. And as for his letters, I haven't seen them, but Hubert is as loyal a Canadian as anyone in this house to-night."

"Oh, René," she cried, her voice breaking and her tears flowing, "I cannot tell you how you have relieved my heart! Forgive me, but they have all been saying such cruel things about him. You would not deceive me?"

"No, Mrs. Brookes. I am telling you God's truth. Hubert is very popular, very gay, very much sought after, but he holds the respect and confidence of all whose opinion is worth anything."

"I can never thank you enough, René, for all you have been to Hubert. Oh, he has said so much of you. And now I must speak to you about Charlotte, and I am afraid that I shall grieve you."

Startled, René looked at her with widening eyes. He dreaded what was coming.

"About Charlotte?" he replied almost in a whisper.

"Yes, René, but I must be frank with you. I needn't tell you that I noticed years ago your boy and girl infatuation. I hoped it would pass. You will allow me to say that I could not but feel that Charlotte would not be happy with a boy of your—forgive me—social standing. Those things mean more to a girl than to a man. But you have shown yourself a man, René, in many ways, a true and noble man, especially in your business with Mr. Hamilton, in your service with the general, and most of all in your kindness to Hubert. Oh! I shall never forget that, René. You must be a good man, and we are all going to be very proud of you, and so somehow I feel quite different about you and Charlotte.

"Her father, of course, is ambitious for her. She was much sought after in England, though a mere girl. Already her father has had more than one formal proposal for her hand in marriage. But she must choose for herself. As far as I am concerned, I shall put nothing in your way.

"But, René, I ought to tell you that Charlotte is changed. She is deeply affectionate as ever, as loyal and true, but she is in some ways a girl, in others a woman. She has all the impulsiveness and temper of a girl. She has the ambition and far-reaching outlook of a woman. She has seen what it means to be a great English lady. You can hardly blame her.

"Don't be misled. To-night she was swept off her feet. Your dramatic entrance, the general's and your own splendid appearance. For, René, as you stood there my heart went out to you in pride and love, and I wanted you, would have been glad to have you as my own son. But, René, the sudden rush of memory in her, the surprise of it all overcame her, and she did that—that beautiful thing. It was the child in her, René, and you must not make too much of it. Oh! I am afraid, afraid! She has seen so much. She has been dazzled by her experience in England. I am afraid for you, and I do not wish her to break your heart. That is all, René. I felt I must tell you."

As Mrs. Brookes was speaking René's head went lower and lower. That so great a lady as he counted Mrs. Brookes should thus give him her heart's confidence, should treat him like an

equal, and especially that she should thus frankly open the way for him to Charlotte, filled him with a great humility.

When she had finished René began in a husky voice.

"Mrs. Brookes, I cannot say what I want to say. When I returned from my journey and called on you that day, I knew you were trying to show me the madness of any hope that I might have for Charlotte, and then and there I gave up the hope. I had brought with me a present for Charlotte, a doeskin suit and a silver fox fur, but I took them away with me. In that hour I gave her up. But, Mrs. Brookes, I cannot forget her while I live, and when I die Charlotte will be here. Charlotte will be here." His hand smote hard upon his breast. "To-night, when I saw her among that throng, the loveliest of them all, my heart sank within me. I saw again my folly. I realized how far she was above me. So high, so far above me. Mrs. Brookes, I wonder if you know that you have caused my hope to live again? Did you mean that? And for that hope, whatever comes of it I could kneel down and kiss your feet at this moment." As he spoke he actually kneeled down before her. His husky voice broke under the strain of the emotion.

"I have never known," he continued, "what it is to love and reverence a mother, but if you ever want a man to serve you as a son, to fight for you, to die for you—and you may—will you give me this chance?"

With tears running down her face Mrs. Brookes leaned forward, lifted his face, and kissed him on the forehead.

"I will remember, René," she said.

At that moment there was a hurried entrance of a man in uniform with a lady on his arm.

"Listen to me, Hope," the man began.

Mrs. Brookes put her hand in René's arm.

"Wait a moment," she said, and she began to wipe from her face the trace of her tears.

The voice went on. It was Harry Marcle's.

"Why waste your love on one who has shown himself to be unworthy? He is known in Boston as a gambler, as a roué. He has never written you a line. He has taken up with another girl, rich and beautiful. He has even forsworn his country. You can see that

in his letters. Could any loyal Britisher write such stuff? Hope, give me a chance. Won't you try to think of me?"

René rose impulsively to his feet.

"Do sit down, René," pleaded Mrs. Brookes. "They will soon go. Don't make a scene."

But with a single stride René stood in view of the startled pair.

"Hope, I could not help hearing what this man said." René's voice was trembling. "He was speaking of a gentleman whom I know well. That gentleman is no gambler or roué. He is no traitor to his country, but a loyal Canadian. He is so respected by his employers that he is to-day being offered a partnership in their firm. He is in love only with one girl, and she is here before me. Were it not for the uniform this man wears I would take him from this room now and chastise him for the dog that he is. He is a liar and a purveyor of lies. Hope, will you join Mrs. Brookes?" he said, offering his arm. With never a look at Marcle he took the girl away with him and gave her into Mrs. Brookes's charge.

"Come with me, Hope," said that lady. "We will find Charlotte now."

As they entered the dancing room there was an excited buzzing among the matrons and the chaperons eager to become acquainted with the young man in buckskins, but Mrs. Brookes made her way to a point whence she could throw a signal to Charlotte, who was dancing with Eustace. Immediately the girl responded.

"Eustace," said Mrs. Brookes, "you know your way about. Will you kindly find me a quiet corner and bring me a little refreshment? I feel somewhat exhausted. Come with me, Hope, you too look a little overtired, my dear."

Charlotte turned to René.

"Oh, René, come, I know just the place for us," and she took him away with a rush to one of the many corners in which the old rambling building abounded. Arrived there, a sudden shyness possessed her. They stood gazing at each other, neither knowing just where in the world of human relations the other was. At length Charlotte plunged into the safe and impersonal.

"They are saying you were just trading, René, but I know

you were on a mission for the general. Wasn't it fine of him to introduce you as he did? I was so proud of you, René. Nobody else in the room knew, not even Mamma."

"Charlotte, I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw you. I can't even now believe that it really is you. You are so wonderful. Too wonderful for me to touch." He glanced down at his buckskins.

"It was your buckskins did it," cried Charlotte. "The very look of them!" She put her hand upon his arm and fingered the softly tanned skin. "The dear familiar look of them brought back the old days and nights. The last night, René!" Her voice sank low.

"But you are different, Charlotte. No longer a little girl. So wonderful. So exquisite. So grand. Do you know what I said when I saw you across the room, looking so lovely?"

"No, what?" said Charlotte smiling up at him.

"I said good-bye to you," said René. "But how can I say good-bye? How can I, Charlotte? Tell me that."

"Why ever should you say good-bye, René?" said Charlotte, with a soft and tender look in her eyes.

"Oh, Charlotte, can't you see?" Then, touching the buckskins and touching the pearls about her neck. "These things are symbolic. How can I dare to touch you? And yet—how can I keep from touching you?"

"That is just what I'm asking, René," replied Charlotte, smiling up into his eyes.

"Don't look at me like that, Charlotte, or I can't keep my hands off you. I can't."

A step sounded behind them. They turned and saw Eustace approaching.

"I have been looking for you everywhere, René," he said. "The chief is wild. In a perfect wax. He wants you. Very sorry to interrupt, don't you know. Don't frown at me like that, Charlotte. I'm not doing it. I am quite distressed."

"Indeed, you may be, Eustace. It is very clumsy of you to find us so soon. You might easily have spent an hour looking for us. You are going, René?"

René nodded, looking quite miserable.

"But you will come back? He will be sending you off some-

where, I know, immediately. But you won't go without seeing me?"

"The chief wants me right away, Eustace?" inquired René.

"Yes, he spoke rather peremptorily, I confess. I rather fancy he wants you. Meantime, I shall take care of you, Charlotte. At any rate, this is our dance, you know. If René has to go, let him come to the ballroom door and we will come out to him at once. Much as I shall resent his intrusion, I will go so far."

René stood looking at Charlotte, his face clouded with disappointment and anger.

"I must go," he said abruptly. "I must go at once. But if I am to be sent away I shall surely see you before I go, Charlotte."

"We will do what Eustace says," replied the girl.

"We haven't had our talk yet—and—not even one dance—if——" He paused, glancing down at his garb.

"Oh!" she cried impatiently, "you think too much about your buckskins."

"Do I? We will have one dance at least, then, Charlotte, no matter what comes."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE BREAK

René found the general in his office, a dispatch in his hand, and pacing up and down the room in wrathful excitement. At the door stood a messenger.

"Listen to this, René," the general burst forth, and read a dispatch from the Indian Department of the government.

"We are informed that three days ago a very important council meeting of Indians was held near Detroit. The Indians resolved upon war with the United States. We wish you to know at the earliest opportunity."

" 'The earliest opportunity!' Does not Colonel Taylor understand that all information in regard to the Indians must be sent to me direct? Why to the department? 'Three days ago.' Seven days now. What may not have happened in three days? This delay is preposterous. Have you any knowledge of this Indian movement?" He turned sharply upon René.

"Yes, sir. That would have been in my report. The Indians are gathering in very considerable force about Tippecanoe. That is Tecumseh's new home town on the Wabash. The great confederacy is being steadily consolidated. Many councils have been held. The Indians protest that their intentions are wholly peaceful, but they are dissatisfied with the treaties that have been made and are making war preparations. Tecumseh has openly declared that he has never acknowledged and will never acknowledge the validity of the Treaty of Greenville. There have been a number of small raids with looting and killings of whites. The white people are very uneasy and much alarmed.

"Last August General Harrison began gathering a considerable force. He has now one thousand men. A good many of them are Kentuckians, well mounted, well armed, and disciplined. He

has erected a fort called after himself. He is planning an advance upon Tippecanoe. The orders of the President of the United States, I believe, are to avoid strife and to negotiate a peace. But it looks to me as if Harrison has little thought of negotiating a peace in making his advance upon Tippecanoe."

"And Tecumseh?" broke in the general, "what is he about? Surely he knows the folly of war at this juncture."

"Tecumseh unhappily is away on a mission to the south. His brother the Prophet is left in charge."

"The Prophet, what of him? Is he a man of strength?"

"He has enormous influence, but is lacking in strength or in sound judgment. He is vain, imperious, jealous of his brother, and he cannot control the Indians."

"Ah! If so, the situation is most dangerous. We must take all steps possible to prevent an immediate outbreak of war. No, no!" he continued. "Not yet, not yet! It would be madness for the Indians to move now."

A tap came to the door. A servant entered with a note. The general read it hastily and said:

"Tell Mrs. Murray that I shall attend her in a few minutes."

"René, I want you to convey a message to Colonel Taylor of the One Hundredth Regiment at Amherstburg and another to Mr. Elliott in charge of the Indians at that point. I shall have these messages ready for you in a few moments. How long before you can start?" He stood with his hand upon the open door.

"At once, sir," replied René. "When I have said good-night to Mrs. Brookes and Miss Brookes."

At the door stood Mrs. Murray and Miss Susan Shaw.

"General, you are ruining your ball. You must come at once. Hungry men are dangerous men!"

"Mrs. Murray, you are a diplomat. I shall be with you in a moment when I have dispatched this young man on a bit of business."

"My dear General!" exclaimed Miss Susan. "Do you mean to say that you are sending this young man away from us? Think of it! And not one of our young ladies has danced with him. You will make yourself extremely unpopular if you do."

"Ah, young man, have you not danced?"

"No, sir, I have not had the opportunity."

"Think of that, General!" said Miss Susan.

"How many dances shall we allow him, Mrs. Murray?" asked the general. "How many dances do you want, sir?"

"One, sir," replied René promptly, with a slight blush on his cheek. "I have begged for one."

"Listen to him," cried Mrs. Murray in a pained voice.

"And after that he will require to take his partner to supper," said Miss Susan, "which will be served immediately upon your appearance, General."

The general laughed pleasantly. "Good! Very sound indeed, Miss Susan! Ah, what would become of us without the fine delicate hand of the ladies to guide us?"

"Have your dance, René," he said, "and your supper. We shall finish our talk immediately afterwards."

"Come, René," said Mrs. Murray, taking his arm. "I am going to call you what all the ladies in there are calling you. We shall find your partner. Thank you, General," she said, leaving him to see Miss Susan to the ballroom for the final dance before supper.

"Thank you, Mrs. Murray," said René, all aglow at the thought of the coming dance. "You have done me a good turn, and now may I presume to ask you something? You see, I have no lady friend to guide me. Might I—would it be proper—would it be quite respectable to ask a young lady in her lovely ball dress to dance with me in my present garb?"

"My dear boy, what in heaven's name does it matter what you are dressed in so that you dance with the right lady?"

"Oh, thank you, thank you. You have been good to me more than once to-night. I hope I may be able some day to serve you."

"René," said Mrs. Murray, her voice growing quiet, "I fear the days are upon us when opportunities for men to serve women in this colony will not be few. Do you not think so?"

René looked at her for a moment in silence. "Yes," he said, "I suppose you know that is so." At the ballroom door they stood for a moment watching the dancers.

"There they are," cried Mrs. Murray, pointing out Eustace and Charlotte, waltzing at the far end of the room. "We shall

wait here till they came, unless," lifting her eyebrows at him, "you would care for a turn with me, since you will force me to ask you?"

René blushed a furious red. "Mrs. Murray, you will think me very rude, but my first, indeed my only, dance to-night is already pledged."

"Ah! You have your courage with you, young man. Never in my life, never, have I asked for a dance, and never have I been refused. Well! It is a unique and possibly a useful experience."

René stood looking miserable and unhappy.

"Mrs. Murray, I assure you I feel desperately bad about it."

"But, my dear boy," tapping him on the arm with her fan, "she is a lucky girl to have so loyal a swain waiting for her. Here they come." And she signaled to Eustace.

"Mr. Burton, will you do me the honor of dancing with me? Your partner will excuse you, I know, under the circumstances."

Charlotte gazed wide eyed at her.

Never in his life had the Honorable Eustace been placed in so awkward a situation.

"My dear Mrs. Murray, if I may have the honor of the next dance," he began.

"The next dance? This dance, I said, Mr. Burton. Really! This is a most trying experience! I am having a most dreadful evening! For the second time this evening, the second time in my life, I have invited a gentleman to dance with me, and for the second time in my existence my invitation has been refused. Truly age must be telling upon me."

"Age, Mrs. Murray!" exclaimed the shocked Eustace. "Nothing that I can imagine would give me so great a pleasure as a dance with you, but, ah!—as you see——"

"Don't! I beg of you—I am already crushed to earth. My dear Charlotte, you will excuse this gallant partner of yours, I am sure. Especially as the other young gentleman has just declined my invitation to dance on the ground that he is engaged to you."

"Mrs. Murray, it is rather a mix-up," cried Charlotte gayly. "They would both infinitely prefer to dance with you, but they both appear to consider themselves bound to me for this dance. You understand, don't you?"

"Perfectly, my dear Charlotte. Come, Mr. Burton, you must put up with me. Afterwards you shall be free. Come, make me forget my humiliation and my growing infirmities," she said with a sad shake of her head, and together they floated off in the waltz.

"Charlotte, you are quite sure you won't mind me in these——"

"René," cried Charlotte, "if you say 'buckskins' again to me this night I shall shriek aloud and flee to my mother for protection."

For answer he put his arms around her, and they were away, conscious only of ecstatic throbbing emotion and the soft pressure of yielding bodies, of rhythmic flowing motion and rhythmic flowing sound and of desire insatiate being fulfilled.

"Do look at them!" said Mrs. Murray with a soft sigh, as they were driven to a corner under the pressure of the flowing stream. "Oh, the wonder, the mystic wonder of the first grand passion."

Eustace's eyes, veiled by half-closed lids, were following the two as they moved through the maze of dancers with the easy grace of perfect accord with each other and with the rhythmic swing of the music.

"Eh what? I beg pardon," he said, waking abruptly as from a dream. "Yes! By Jove. He's been studying more than law in Boston."

"First thrills!" again said Mrs. Murray. "Only once they come to us."

"First thrills! what? Oh, I say, Mrs. Murray! I get 'em frequently, don't you know. Jolly good they are, too. Let's have a few all our own, eh what? I have a very distinct expectation at this present moment. Shall we follow the example of our young friends?"

"We might try," she said, raising her lovely eyes to his.

"I feel 'em coming, by Jove," said Eustace, taking her in his arms.

"You're a dangerous man, Mr. Burton, I can see."

"If I could only think so," replied Eustace with a heavy sigh. "But, I say, do you observe the general? I believe he's getting 'em, eh what? Look at him."

"I shouldn't wonder," replied Mrs. Murray, her eyes follow-

ing the figures of the general and Miss Susan in the waltz. "I do hope so, I'm sure. Susan is a lovely girl."

"The world's full of 'em," replied Eustace with conviction.

At the conclusion of the dance and the extra following René and Charlotte found their way to the supper room.

"Where did you learn to dance so exquisitely, René?" said Charlotte. "I never had such a partner."

"Nor I," replied René. "This is my second ball."

"Tell me about your first," she said.

And over their supper René told her of the Gerry ball, of the magnificent splendor of the rooms, the bewildering beauty of the ladies' dresses, the seduction of the music. Charlotte listened the while with shadowed face to his glowing picture.

"And who is responsible for your perfection in the art of dancing?" she asked quietly.

"Oh, I never should have gone at all, never should have learned to dance—I was far too busy—but for Nora."

"Nora? That is the girl whose life you saved?" Charlotte's voice was quick and sharp.

René gazed at her in sprprise. "Who told you about that? Hubert, I suppose. What did he tell you?"

"Never mind. Tell me about her—about saving her."

"Oh, it was nothing at all," said René impatiently. "They made a great fuss about nothing. It was this way." And he gave a colorless account of the incident. "It was easy enough. Anyone would have done the same thing," he concluded. "Only I bungled the finish of it."

Charlotte shuddered.

"You might have been killed," she said severely.

"Killed? Nonsense. I was knocked out for a few minutes."

"And she? She saved your life?"

René laughed aloud.

"She flung a couple of gallons of water over me. Soaked me to the skin. I was mad clear through."

"And she taught you to dance?" persisted Charlotte.

"Well, she began it, and she insisted on my coming to the ball—she and Sally Fisbee."

"Sally Fisbee, who is she? I have never heard about her."

"No, Hubert wouldn't tell you about her. He's rather fond of Nora, I think."

"Is he in love with her?"

"No, not in love with her," said René, remembering his last talk with Hubert. "He's fond of her just in a friendly way. He is in love with Hope, you know."

"And Nora is in love with you?" Deep lights were burning in Charlotte's black eyes.

"In—love—with me!" amazement in his tone. "Why, she's a great heiress and the loveliest girl in all Boston."

"She is in love with you, all the same," asserted Charlotte. "You know she is."

"I—I never thought of such a thing. She likes me, I think."

René's memory was working swiftly. Could it be that this was Nora's grief? No! no! It was preposterous.

"No, she couldn't be in love with me," he added lamely, his memory still flooding him with Nora's looks and words. "No! no! The thing is absurd."

"She is in love with you." Charlotte's voice grew more positive, her manner more imperious. "You know she is. And—and —you kissed her, too."

René sat back and looked at her like a convicted criminal.

"Kissed her?" he echoed faintly. "Did Hubert——"

"No, Hubert didn't. But I know you did, and you cannot deny it." The girl's face was flaming. "Did you or did you not? Yes or no?"

"Let me tell you about it, Charlotte. Listen to me."

"Oh!" she cried, her voice low and vibrant, her words rushing forward in tempestuous torrent, "do I want to hear about how you did it, that she lifted her lips to you as I did, that you put your arms about her as you did about me, that you held her close? Oh! oh! oh! And I was going to kiss you to-night." She was now floundering wildly in the surging seas of her passion.

René sat before her, stunned, helpless, dumb, confusion in every line of his face.

"Charlotte, listen to me," he entreated. "Let me explain."

"Explain! Explain what? And, oh, I wanted so to kiss you—" her eyes filled with a rush of tears—"and now—now I never

want to see you again—never want you to touch me. Oh! I thought I was—you were—oh, I hate you! You have deceived me. Take me to my mother, please. At once."

"Wait till you are able to look people in the face again," said René quietly. "You need not fear, I shall not touch you, nor try to touch you. No, don't rise yet. I ought to have known you are far too high for me. I was a mad fool ever to think of anything else. I loved you, Charlotte, I love you still, I shall always love you. But it is the maddest, wildest folly. It is all over. There are other things than love, thank God! Yes, other things that will give us all something to think about. I did kiss Nora Danby. No! Sit down," he ordered sternly. "I must tell you. She bid me tell you. I told her about you. I——"

"Told her about me? Told her what?" cried Charlotte, panting in her rage. "Told her that you kissed me—took advantage of me, a child. Oh! oh!" Her hands were writhing under the table.

René's face went white. His lips, his jaws were set as if bronze.

"Took advantage of you? Perhaps I did. I tried not to—but I loved you so," he said slowly. "When you are quite ready I shall take you to your mother."

Charlotte threw a swift glance at his face. At last she had reached a vital spot in him. That last taunt had done it. She had hurt him. She experienced an immense relief, a supreme satisfaction. She only wished she could hurt him more. Her opportunity presently came.

"Oh, never mind, René," she cried with a swift change of manner. "Here is Mr. Howard. Mr. Howard, René has to go immediately," she said, smiling into that young man's face. "An engagement demands his immediate attention. Isn't it horrid for him? Will you take me to my mother?"

"Hello, René!" exclaimed young Howard. "Awfully glad to see you again. Awfully glad! I want to see you! When will you be in York? Soon, I hope. Come then to see us. Mother and sister are always asking after you. Always wanting me to bring you."

René shook hands warmly with Howard, expressed his joy at seeing him and his eager desire to meet his mother and sister.

"First time I can get to York I shall let you know. Now, will you be good enough to take care of Miss Brookes?"

"Good-bye, Charlotte, I shall not soon forget our dance—a wonderful dance—nor our talk," he added.

"Oh, good-bye!" cried Charlotte, her dark eyes flashing a joyous farewell. "Nor shall I forget. Good-bye." Her voice rang out in cheerful musical cadence.

René hurried away to find the general, a throng of friends offering here and there greetings as he pushed his way through the crowd. He found the general pacing his office like a lion in a cage.

"About this Indian trouble," the general began abruptly. "I understand you to say that General Harrison has been gathering together an army, has erected a fort somewhere near the Wabash, and that he is moving toward Tippecanoe? That Tecumseh is on a mission to the South? That the Prophet is in charge of the Indians at Tippecanoe? This dispatch announces a decision of the Indian council in favor of war. This must be prevented at all costs, and immediate action is necessary. Have you any suggestions?"

"I would suggest, sir, that inasmuch as the Wyandots hold the Great Wampum Belt, which gives them the final say in regard to war, that we get word to them immediately urging peace. At this moment a band of Wyandots under a young chief whom I know well is at the Grand River. It is just possible that I may catch him there."

"Good!" said the general. "You will proceed immediately to Grand River. Convey this message to the Wyandot chief, urging the futility, the mad futility of war at this juncture. War must not come till there is concerted action between us. Tell him that at the present time we will support no war by the Indians against the Americans. If Canada is attacked we shall make war with all the power we possess, and we shall then make common cause with the Indians. Meantime, no war, you understand?"

"Yes, sir," replied René.

"Further, see Elliott, give him this letter. It sets forth what I have said to you. See also Colonel Taylor of the One Hundredth Regiment. Give him this letter. Let him know that I am much dis-

turbed by his failure to keep me informed as to the action of the Indians. I am saying to him that in future all communications must be sent me direct. This is all. Report to me with all possible speed."

"My report, sir?"

"Your report can wait until you return. I have every confidence in your wisdom and your zeal. By the way," said the general with a smile, "you had your dance, I observed. Charming young lady indeed. And supper?"

"Yes, sir."

"When can you depart?"

"Immediately, sir, when I have said good-bye to Mrs. Brookes."

The general touched a bell. An attendant appeared.

"Send Mr. Burton immediately."

"You have money?"

"Yes, sir."

"And blankets and everything you need?"

"Yes, sir."

"Your horse?"

"No, sir, it is at my home."

In a few minutes Eustace appeared.

"Mr. Burton," said the general, "will you see that René has everything that he may require in the way of provisions, blankets, horse—everything, in short, that he may need.

"Now, sir, you will need two or three hours' sleep before you go."

"No, sir, I can sleep after I see the Wyandots at the Grand River."

"Ah, good! That is the spirit!" exclaimed the general, his voice ringing with pride. "Now, the best of luck to you. We shall be glad to see you upon your return. Now, go make your farewells to Mrs. Brookes and the other ladies. I regret to spoil your evening." He shook hands warmly with René, who set out at once to find Mrs. Brookes.

"I say, old chap," said Eustace, taking him by the arm. "I shall find Charlotte for you and have her meet you in that so-called conservatory—rather a rum place. Later I shall meet you at the quartermaster's store."

After a frantic search through the many and varied rooms of the Navy Hall Eustace discovered Charlotte in company with young Howard, partaking of slight refreshment in the supper room.

"Awfully sorry, Charlotte!" he exclaimed. "You will be ready to curse me, but I have fallen upon the most wretched luck. I must cancel every dance I have. I am off on duty to outfit René."

"Outfit René!" exclaimed Charlotte.

"Yes, I am outfitting the young beggar for some fresh expedition or other, poor devil. He'll have a night of it, too. It's beginning to rain. Awfully sorry. You will probably meet him in that extraordinary conservatory. I must away."

"Does Mamma know?" inquired Charlotte.

"René has gone to say good-bye to your mother. You will find him, doubtless, with her. Now I must run. The general does not like any delay in obeying orders."

"Mr. Howard," said Charlotte, "I think Mamma ought to know that René is going. She will wish to say good-bye. Take me to her, please."

Her manner was so peremptory that young Howard felt at once that he must obey without parley, but it was only after a lengthened search that Mrs. Brookes was discovered.

"Thank you, Mr. Howard," said Charlotte with her sweetest smile. "You need not wait. Thank you, I shall see you later in the evening, if you care."

"I shall return for you," said Howard, "after the next dance."

"Mamma!" exclaimed Charlotte when he had gone, "René is off again to those Indians. Did you know?"

"Yes, my child, he has just left me. He wished me to say good-bye."

"But, Mamma, I must see him before he goes. I must! I must!"

"But, Charlotte, why all this excitement? This is most unseemly. You must learn to control yourself. If René goes he will return in a day or two."

"But he may not. I must see him, Mamma. I must see him to-night. Do get him. No, I will get him myself. Which way did he go?"

"My dear Charlotte!" Her mother's voice was calm and firm.

"Don't go dashing about. You are a child no longer. Remain here. I shall find him and bring him to you."

But minutes passed and still no sign of either her mother or René. Charlotte became more and more anxious and distressed. She was sure René would be gone and that he would not come to say good-bye to her. Not after the way in which she had dismissed him. Indeed, he might never come back to her. He was off again to those Indians and might be away for weeks, and anything might happen. She must find him at all costs. She could wait no longer. She ran toward the hall and found it full of guests, but no sign of René. Door after door she opened, through a labyrinth of anterooms, hallways, and passages, till she came to a side entrance. There stood the general in the open door.

He was waving his hand in farewell. "Good-bye, René," he called out into the dark night. "The best of luck."

Charlotte darted into a cubbyhole till the general had gone back to his office. Then she flew to the door, opened it, peered out into the dark. Nothing of René was to be seen.

"René!" she called softly. But only the rain upon the leaves answered her. She ran back into the house, caught up a cloak, and rushed forth again down the gravel walk to the back gate.

"René!" she cried, and again more loudly, "René!" but still only the myriad voices of the rain made answer and the soft whispering of the wind among the leaves. He was gone! She had hurt him cruelly.

She remembered his set face, the pain in his eyes. He would never return to her. Trembling, blinded with her tears, she made her way toward the door.

But beyond the gate far down the road René had heard that call. He halted, turned about, started to run back. Again he halted. To what purpose should he return? Why pursue this idle dream? She was not for him. Who was he? What had he to offer any woman? He loved her. Then why ruin her life? Others were seeking her who could give her what he could never give. He stood rooted to the ground. He knew well he was making what would be a final decision for him. To-morrow or next week, certainly within a month or two, war would come. He could serve her best by being a friend. Slowly he turned and walked forward

into the dark. This girl who was his very life was not for him, and with war coming over the horizon this was no time to think of love. Once more he turned and looked back toward the gleaming lights. He could just hear the faint sound of music. Then at top speed he set off for the quartermaster's store.

CHAPTER XXX

THE CONQUEST OF FEAR

It was late chill October. With three hundred miles by trail and canoe behind him, with a stray bullet from an American rifle in his leg, fevered, blind with pain, stumbling with weakness, the runner made the door of Fort George orderly room. He seized the latch, swayed drunkenly in, steadied himself, and staggered across to an inner door. Shouts of welcome fell upon his dulling senses —men sprang to his aid. The inner door opened, the runner stiffened to attention and in rapid parrot-like speech made his report. His mission was too late. The big battle had taken place. General Harrison, the Governor of Indiana, with nine hundred riflemen and cavalry had marched upon Tecumseh's new headquarters at Tippecanoe.

A mile and a half from the Indian village nine hundred young braves had broken loose from the authority of the Prophet, had attacked Harrison's army, had been defeated, leaving three hundred braves dead upon the field of battle with three hundred white soldiers dead beside them. Next day Tippecanoe, the rallying center of the confederacy, was a smoking devastation.

Soon after this disaster, despairing of American alliance, Tecumseh, with a remnant of his followers, had set out for Canada.

This was the runner's story. His tale finished, he fell into incoherent babbling and was put to bed. A week's fever, a fortnight's convalescence in Miss Elspeth's feather bed under her maternal care, and René was on the way to health and strength again.

"You will be ready for the Peace Meeting on Friday, I doubt," said Dr. MacCrimmon to his patient.

"Indeed, and that will he not," declared Miss Elspeth, "not a foot of him from this house for another week whatever."

"You will be going yourself, Elspeth, doubtless," said the doctor, smiling at the little lady.

"That will I, if the Lord speers me. I will be hearing what yon man Willcocks has to say, and, yes, your Benajah Mallory as well," said Miss Elspeth, adding with venomous irony, "It is yourself will be playing the pipes at them, I doubt. Ay, 'The Garb of old Gaul' would be appropriate."

René shouted his delight. The doctor smiled a smile of amused patience at his fiery sister.

"We will all go, Miss Elspeth," said René. "We have still four days to build up force and fury for the great Peace Meeting."

On Friday night the Masonic Hall was packed, so that the MacCrimmons, with René in charge, were forced to take seats upon the improvised speakers' platform. The atmosphere was tense. All other issues for the time forgotten. The question of the hour was War or Peace.

The majority present were pacifist in their leanings and were composed of recent American settlers and later Loyalists with others whose hatred of the government led them to oppose whatever measures it might propose. The minority were United Empire Loyalists and their children, fervently patriotic, savagely anti-American, eager to avenge their wrongs upon their traditional enemy.

The chairman was Mr. Nathan Radcliffe, a Later Loyalist, but professing himself a loyal Canadian. Calling the meeting to order, he invited the Reverend Benajah Mallory to open the proceedings with prayer. Instantly growling protests arose from the Loyalists, who had strategically captured the front seats. Mr. Mallory, however, undisturbed, proceeded to enlighten the Almighty as to the present situation in the country and to suggest useful lines of influence. The prayer extolled the blessings of civil and religious liberty and deplored the wickedness prevalent in the colony, and more especially in those occupying high places, and concluded with an invocation of Divine aid in the guidance of opinion, so that the blessings of peace and good will might continue to be enjoyed.

Upon the conclusion of the prayer angry murmurs rose anew. They wanted no blanked Yankee Methodist preacher praying

over them. Moreover, the reference to the high-placed sinners was regarded as a hit below the belt.

The chairman made it clear that he was free from all partisan prejudices and was only anxious that the meeting should be conducted in an orderly manner. The object of the meeting was to discuss the best method of preserving peace in their country, a thing they all desired. They had three distinguished members of Legislature with them. He was quite sure that they would be given a fair hearing. He called upon the Reverend Benajah Mallory to address the meeting.

Immediately Mr. Isaac Swayzie was on his feet. "May I be permitted to ask a question, sir?" said Mr. Swayzie.

"Most certainly, sir. Questions are always in order."

"Then let me ask in what capacity does the speaker address us, as the Reverend Benajah Mallory, or as Benajah Mallory, Esquire, member of Legislature?"

The chairman was at a loss to answer.

Mr. Mallory, with bland, broad smile, came to his rescue with the assurance that Mr. Swayzie's question would be answered in due time.

"And now, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen—and I am glad——"

Again Mr. Swayzie insisted upon an answer. "For if Mr. Mallory means to preach a sermon I prefer to listen to him as I have often listened to him, at a proper time and place." Loud cheers arose from the front benches.

Mr. Mallory intervened to assure Mr. Swayzie that while he was a minister of the Gospel regularly ordained—cries of "Oh! Oh!" and "Where did you get your orders?"

"Order! Order!" came sharply from the chairman.

"Still, I am here to-night as a citizen of this country claiming the right of free speech and willing to accord that right to my fellow citizens."

Mr. Mallory thereupon proceeded to elaborate the theme of the wickedness of war, the horrors, the sorrows, the terrors of war. Everything should be done to prevent the calamity of war. He violently attacked the government for its policy of promoting war. He believed, however, that in answer to the prayers of all good

people, and in response to the demand throughout the country for peace, war might be averted.

At the close of his speech Black Biggar arose. "I would like to ask the gentleman this question. 'If the Americans invade Canada, what should we do?' "

Mr. Mallory smilingly replied that he would leave his friend Mr. Willcocks to deal with this question.

At this point a group of militia men in uniform, with Lieutenants Marcle, Edward Brookes, and Sergeant Major Ross, entered the hall and were received with enthusiastic cheers by the Loyalists.

The chairman then called upon the second speaker, Mr. Thomas Marcle, Member of Legislature, to address the meeting.

Mr. Marcle dealt with the appalling costs of war and emphasized the fact that war costs meant taxes. Taxes would drive away population, which would mean heavier taxes for those that remained. His figures were impressive, his calculations unchallengeable. The effect was highly depressing to the War party.

Again Mr. Biggar put his question, and again the question was relegated to Mr. Willcocks for an answer.

When Mr. Willcocks was announced he was greeted with a roar of angry voices, which seemed to please the speaker rather than otherwise.

"Jail bird!" "Dirty rebel!" "Where do you come from?"

"I'm not ashamed of the country that gave Sir Arthur Wellesley to the British army."

"How much do you get from the New York Irish rebels?"

"All I can, and from the Canadian Scots too, wouldn't you?"

A roar of laughter from his friends.

"Who pays for your paper?"

"You, in part, I hope, and all intelligent citizens who love good literature and who stand for free speech."

Again cheers greeted his reply.

Once more Mr. Biggar put his question.

"That is a perfectly fair and proper question, Ladies and Gentlemen, and I propose to answer it, and answer it so as to satisfy Mr. Biggar and every other fair-minded Canadian citizen." But first he wished to say how profoundly he had been impressed with

the speeches they had heard, as they too had been. One fault only he had to find with them. They failed fully and rightly to depict the iniquity, the horror, the cost of war—why? Because no language could be found adequate to the case. Why did not his vociferous friends in the front seats challenge the appalling facts? They could not, they dared not. Then, in eloquent sonorous periods, Mr. Willcocks proceeded to elaborate these themes with tremendous effect.

"Do these gentlemen who so lightly advocate war ever stop to picture the horrors of the battlefield? Women, do you wish these for your sons, your husbands? Mothers, what about that gallant lad of yours?"

Women were listening with pale faces and tearful eyes.

"Oh, rubbish! sentimental rubbish!" sneered Mr. Swayzie. "War is the price of freedom!"

Mr. Swayzie's remark offered a glorious opportunity. Like a tiger the speaker was upon him.

"Sentimental rubbish!" he cried in a voice throbbing with passionate indignation. "Yes! To Mr. Swayzie it may be sentimental rubbish. Mr. Swayzie has neither son nor daughter, no womenkind, as far as I know. To him all the agony and blood, all the tears and broken hearts that follow in the wake of war, all this is mere sentimental rubbish. Mr. Swayzie is eager for war. He is eager to see other men's sons go to the shambles of the battlefield. He is eager to see other men's wives widowed, other men's children orphaned. Sentimental rubbish! God save me and my country from the guidance of such heartlessness as that."

Mr. Swayzie sprang to his feet.

"Mr. Chairman, I protest against this unfair, this wicked distortion of my remark. I yield to no man in my horror of war. I know something of these horrors of war. My family has suffered these horrors of war. Yes! And at the hands of those same friends of the speaker, who will be at our throats again in a few weeks. Yes, Mr. Chairman, I mind well when they came onto us, murdered my father and big brother. I mind well how my mother and me hid down in the cellar, and down through the cracks in the floor something warm and sticky dropped on my face. It was the blood of my younger brother, fifteen years old, killed by them

bloody Revolutionaries. And why? Because we stood for our government, the only government we knew, the British government. And these same bloody murderers will come and do the same thing to us again if we let them. That's why I say that war is the price of freedom."

The little man's swarthy face was pallid, distorted with passion. His voice rose to a hoarse shriek. He stood close to the edge of the platform, and leaning far over toward Willcocks shook his stick in his face. The effect was overwhelming. His words roused similar memories of outrage in many of the Loyalists in the front seats. A fierce, beastlike, snarling roar burst from hot throats and hot hearts. For thirty years these vengeful fires had burned in them. The day of retribution was at hand. For some minutes the uproar continued.

"What folly is this?" said Mr. Willcocks when he could make himself heard. "Has Mr. Swayzie ever read history? What answer does history make? What does Poland say, and Ireland? Yes—" and here he swung round upon Hector MacCrimmon, conspicuous on the platform at his back—"what is Scotland's answer? Alas! Flodden Field!"

Like a lightning flash cutting clear through the sonorous eloquence of the speaker came the high clear voice of a lady.

"No, no, my man! Not Flodden Field. Bannockburn!" It was Miss Elspeth.

Explosive, tumultuous, there broke a roar, savage, fiercely triumphant. The pent-up emotions roused by the orator, the hostile passionate protest, vainly waiting opportunity for expression, had at last found a vent in that one word. Every loyal Scot in the audience, pro or anti, joined in the demonstration. They stood upon the seats, upon the window sills, waving hats and sticks in a perfect pandemonium of uproar. For some minutes the crowd was a heaving, boiling mass of human welter.

In vain Mr. Willcocks's powerful voice sought to pierce the tumultuous uproar, but again and once again the cheers, yells, cries broke forth. Above them all soared high the majestic word. "Bannockburn! Bannockburn! Bannockburn!"

All Willcocks's weighty argumentation, all his fervid oratory was as naught before the waves of passion that surged over the

raging company, released by that great historic, talismanic word. In vain the chairman hammered the table for order. Here and there throughout the hall fights were begun. Indeed, it appeared that the meeting would speedily develop into a riot. In the midst of the turmoil Dr. Hector MacCrimmon walked forward to the edge of the platform and, raising his great voice, demanded and obtained order.

"This meeting has apparently degenerated into a riot. I therefore move an adjournment." A score of voices were heard to second the motion, and at the doctor's bidding the motion was unanimously carried with wild acclaim and with roaring cheers for Miss Elspeth.

"It is long past your time for your bed, laddie," she said. "We will be going home."

CHAPTER XXXI

THE WAR DRUM

The root house was almost finished. And a stout affair it was, with walls three feet high and a pitch roof, built of six-inch cedar logs and cunningly fitted with a stout door and shuttered windows. It stood conveniently near the house.

"There!" said René. "With two feet of earth on the top she'll keep out the frost, eh, Black Hawk?"

The Indian grunted his approval.

"And a good-sized cannon ball too, eh?"

Black Hawk grunted his understanding.

"How get out?" he inquired.

"Ah, ah! that is a secret. Easy." René took a paper from his pocket and sketched an underground passage from the root house, the exit of which was a trapdoor in the house living room. Also showed an underground passage from the root house to a clump of bushes some twenty feet distant. Thus the root house with loophole and window shutter became a serviceable miniature fort.

"Not a word of this, Black Hawk, to a soul. Only three people know: yourself, the Sergeant Major, and me."

"Ah!" grunted Black Hawk, admiration and approval gleaming in his black eyes.

"We'll dig those passages out at night, eh?"

"Good!" said the Indian. "Much good."

The sound of voices and of tramping horses came to their ears.

"Hello! Visitors!" said René. A company of ladies and gentlemen on horseback were riding up the lane, the Honorable Eustace with Mrs. Murray and Charlotte leading, Harry Marcle with Hope next, Hugh Talbot with Serena and Chick bringing up the rear.

After greetings Eustace exclaimed, "I say, René, can't you join us? Come along, old chap. Jolly ride, supper, and that sort of

thing at the Burches', where there is a logging bee, I believe you call it, in progress. We end up at Charlotte's house with a little hoe-down, as I believe she calls it."

"Hoe-down we all call it," replied Charlotte. "But, Eustace, why bother René? I know he won't come."

René's face was very grave for a moment or two.

"I don't know how you know I won't come, but I am sorry it is quite impossible."

"Oh, come on, René," begged little Chick.

"Sorry, old boy. I say, you stay with me. I must ride into town in the evening, and then I will take you home, or I'll take you to the hoe-down, eh? This afternoon we might perhaps dig out a badger."

"Oh, may I, Hope?" eagerly cried the little chap. "I want to like anything."

"Why, certainly, if it won't bother you, René, too much to bring him to the dance at Colonel Brookes's to-night."

"That's all right, Hope, I'll look after him," replied René.

He stood looking after the cavalcade as they took the trail by the back pasture through the wood long after they were lost in the bush.

Early in the afternoon Black Hawk took himself off toward the Grand River, leaving René and Chick to dig out an old and very fierce badger. That gentleman's home, however, consisted of such a labyrinth of underground passages that, after exploring some half dozen of these, the marauders were forced to leave him in security and peace. Chick's disappointment was mollified to a certain extent by the thought of the badger in his underground fort chuckling triumphantly over his enemies.

An early tea, and they rode off to town, Chick in high glee over the honor of riding side by side with René on his famous mare Gyp. As they proceeded down the main street of the little town of Niagara a man came out from a store and hailed René.

"Well, Mr. Thomas Clark, what's up?"

"The very devil, René," said Mr. Clark, drawing near and speaking in a low voice. "A terrible thing has happened. Come in. For heaven's sake, get the boy out of here."

"He'll come in and take a look at your furs, Mr. Clark," said

René. "Chick is becoming quite an expert in furs. Come along, Chick."

"Now, what's the matter, Mr. Clark?" inquired René after he had followed that gentleman into the little cubbyhole that did for an office.

"René, it has come at last! It's hell and damnation! Oh, my God! my God! I never thought it would come! Read that!" He flung a letter on the table.

It was from the New York agent of the great fur dealer, Mr. John Jacob Astor, and on private information from Secretary Gallitin announced that on the eighteenth day of June war had been declared by the United States upon Great Britain.

"On June 18th—six days ago," said René. "Do they know across the river there?"

"I do not think so," replied Mr. Clark. "I have seen no sign. This will be the first intimation in this part of the world."

"Then quick action is necessary, Mr. Clark. Give me that letter."

"What are you going to do, René?"

"Do! This must be in the general's hands at the earliest possible minute. Now, Mr. Clark, not a word to a soul. You don't know who you are talking to about here. Let me have a pen."

He seized a bit of paper and wrote rapidly:

DEAR EUSTACE,

I'm off to York. Ride for your life to headquarters. Say nothing to a soul, but ride! ride!

RENÉ.

He passed out into the store.

At the crossroads they halted.

"Now, Chick, I want you to do something for me and no questions. Just like a soldier."

Chick nodded with grave face and understanding eyes.

"Take this note to Eustace at the Brookes Manor House. Give it to him and no one else. You understand?"

Again Chick nodded and without a word was off at a gallop.

Gypsy was in her finest fettle. Ready to give all she had. Ready to give her master all he asked of her. And she did.

As the pearly gray of dawn was showing over the broad bosom of Lake Ontario René rode up to the officers' quarters on Garrison Common at Little York and, early as it was, found the general at his desk. He presented his letter and stood waiting.

"Is this known across the river?" he asked René.

"Clark says no, sir."

"Then the information will hardly have reached Hull at Detroit."

Instantly he had his clerk in and before he had taken breakfast he had dictated the general orders necessary to set the wheels of war in motion and had summoned his officers for a council an hour later.

"Now, René, we shall have breakfast," he said, rubbing his hands gleefully.

The general was in high spirits. For ten years he had endured, not without chafing, his term of office in Canada. Brother officers and comrades had been winning distinction in British continental wars. He had been wasting his time in this remote colony, but wasting his time to some purpose. During those ten years he had mastered the map of Canada. Its physical features, roads, bridges, contours, waterways, were photographed on his mind. He had studied its people. He knew their habits, their political tendencies, their tempers, their spirit. He knew the location, strength, equipment, discipline of every company, regulars and militia, under his command. The beat of the war drum found him ready to give immediate response. Every move had been carefully thought out. Like a machine running in oil, his brain moved swiftly, with precision, but without hurry or worry.

At breakfast the general laid aside his somewhat stern and rigid manner and conversed freely and frankly with his guest. The day before he had received a letter from the governor, Sir George Prevost, urging forbearance toward the United States. The governor still believed that it was possible to avoid war. The home government was anxious to use the utmost endeavor to prevent war's outbreak. Indeed, the Ministry believed that the difficulties between the two nations could easily be arranged. Preparations had been made for the withdrawing of Orders in Council. The pressure at home for troops was so great that the Forty-

first and Forty-ninth were about to be ordered back for service on the Continent. There were none to spare for Canada. Indeed, Lord Liverpool had suggested that further enlistment in Canada would be necessary, that the Glengarry Fencibles should be disbanded. One bright spot there was on the horizon, and that was Quebec. The people of that province, political leaders and peasants alike, had responded splendidly to the governor's appeal for recruits. Military organization was far advanced and the Legislature in the most loyal and hearty manner had made a truly magnificent financial response.

"That is due to Sir George Prevost," said the general. "We must give him credit for his fine diplomacy in handling a very difficult situation in Lower Canada, but he appears to be possessed with a passion for peace. He could not be persuaded that war was possible. This news will be something of a shock to him," said the general with an ironical smile.

After breakfast he went to his officers. "Gentlemen," he said, "I thank you for your prompt attendance. News of the utmost importance has just arrived, brought by my young friend here from Niagara. Gentlemen, we are at war! We have been at war for seven days. Of this, fortunately, our immediate neighbors are equally in ignorance with ourselves. Their forces, however, are in place. We may expect immediate invasion. We are prepared for them, and, please God, shall repel the invader."

The officers stood gazing at him in silence. It seemed as if they were holding their breath.

"Gentlemen, you will give attention to the following instructions for regimental and company officers."

His clerk read the instructions prepared.

"Also, gentlemen, to the following general orders which will be issued to-morrow."

The clerk read the general orders.

"Regimental and general officers and staff will remain for a few moments.

"Gentlemen, your king and your country rely upon your promptness in obeying orders, your attention to the minutest detail of your duty. As to your courage, loyalty, and devotion I need

say nothing. I rely entirely upon you. Gentlemen, I wish you good-morning."

At that moment the long-pent-up emotion broke forth. Cheer upon cheer rang through the orderly room. The general waved his hand.

"To your duty, gentlemen," he said, and passed into the inner room.

The general officers and company commanders followed him. There were present Lieutenant-Colonel Grantham, Lieutenant-Colonel Chewett, Captains Howard, Peter Robinson, Button, Selby, and Cameron, and Major Allen. The general read over again the instructions and general orders with comments.

"Have you any questions, gentlemen? Do not hesitate. It is of the utmost importance that you should be clear as to every detail of these orders and as to the general plan of operations."

Questions came thick and fast and as promptly received their answers.

"Now, gentlemen," said the general when the discussion and questioning had ceased, "I shall not detain you further. Good-morning."

"Captain Macdonell, Captain Robinson, Captain Howard, you will please remain. Major Evans and Captain Glegg, you will be prepared to proceed with me across the lake within two hours. Please have a boat and crew ready."

"Now, then," said the general, turning to René, "I must have a messenger to carry these dispatches to Captain Roberts at St. Joseph's Island."

"Shall I go, sir?" said René.

"No, I shall need you for other work, René, for dispatches to Amherstburg."

"May I suggest a runner, sir?" said René. "Chief Black Hawk of the Mohawks is a thoroughly reliable man. He is at Grand River. I can get him on my way west. I can guarantee him."

"Very good, sir. Get these to him," said the general, handing René the dispatches.

Outside the door René found Marcle waiting.

"Terrible business this, eh, René? Smashes everything up. Where are you bound for just now?"

René regarded him in silence.

"I am off to the front," continued Marcle. "Must close up some things there along the river. Captain Button says our troops will be called out at once. You're going south too, I suppose? Perhaps we can go together?"

"I'm off to the Grand River," said René. "Some business there that I must clean up."

"I say, René," replied Marcle, "let's wash out everything. No time for anything else now but war."

"All right, I agree, Marcle. Let's wash it out," said René, ashamed that he could put so little cordiality into his voice.

"I'm with you," replied Marcle, offering his hand, which in spite of himself René took with some reluctance.

After he had left Marcle, René found young Vincent Howard waiting him at the entrance to the fort.

"Hello, René, Colonel Chewett told me to wait for you, so I waited. Come dine with us. They will be delighted to see you at home. Do come. The colonel said you would need a horse. I have a beauty for you."

"Thank you, Howard. Awfully good of you. No dinner for me to-day, but your horse, if you will."

"Come along, then."

Howard's home, though quite unpretentious and primitive, was comfortably, even beautifully furnished, recalling in its appointments the English home from which Colonel Howard had brought his young wife and little family some fifteen years ago.

Vincent ushered his friend into a large and beautiful living room and called aloud for his mother. At once Mrs. Howard appeared, a petite, dainty, fragile lady, arrayed in a plain house dress, but carrying herself with a dignity that seemed to add inches to her height.

"This is René, Mother," announced Howard.

Eagerly his mother came forward with hand outstretched in welcome.

"Oh, Vincent, you should have warned me," she cried. "I ought to be in my best gown to receive so good a friend. It is a very real joy to meet you Mr.—no, I shall call you René. Vincent has told me all about you. Oh! he has no secrets from his mother, the bad

boy," flinging a loving glance at her son. "I can never forget your kindness to him."

René expressed his pleasure at meeting Howard's mother, making light of any service he had done. "I'm afraid," he added, "I played the fool a bit myself that evening. I was rather spectacular, I confess. It really was a bit of a game you know, and we had to carry it off."

"Well, Mother," said Vincent in a cheery voice, "the great news has come at last."

"What, Vincent? You do not mean——" Mrs. Howard stopped short, her hand fluttering to her heart, her face going slowly white.

"Yes, Mother, it is war. René brought the news in this morning from Niagara."

Quietly Mrs. Howard motioned René to a chair and sat down herself without speaking. For the first time in his life René thanked God that he had no mother, none of womankind to wear such a face for him.

"They expect to walk right over us those blooming Yankees," blustered Vincent, making talk, "but they'll find the walking a little rough going, I am thinking. But, René, you want my horse. I'm giving René Lightning, Mother. He is riding with dispatches for the general."

"Oh, surely, surely!" cried his mother. "Yes, indeed—the horse—anything we have—all we have—is at the general's command. You will wait dinner with us, René?"

"Thank you for the horse, Mrs. Howard, and thank you for your kind invitation, but I shall eat as I ride. Every minute counts now."

"Ah, yes! yes! don't keep him, Vincent. Do see about Lightning at once. Don't keep him!" Her eyes were like burning coals in her white face. War had come with its relentless demands. Her blood stream had come down through a line of fighting men and brave women.

As Mrs. Howard spoke a young girl came dancing down the stairs, a vision of radiant loveliness, her hair like a cloud of shining gold about her face, through which eyes of deep blue glanced like sunlight on water.

"Constance, this is René, Vincent's friend, you remember?"

"Oh, I know, I know!" cried the girl, running to him and offering her hand. "I've seen him but he didn't see me. I saw him at the opening of the Parliament, Mother, and I was disappointed that I did not meet him."

"I saw you too, but at a distance," said René. "It was difficult to get near you, and then I was called away early."

"But what's wrong, Mother?" said the girl. "Are you ill?"

"We must not be ill. We dare not be ill. We must be strong, Constance. René has brought us terrible news. War has come, and he is carrying dispatches for the general. But excuse me. I will have something put up for your lunch," said Mrs. Howard, leaving the room.

The girl's face had grown very still while her mother had been speaking, but the light only deepened in her blue eyes. "War!" she said in an awed voice. "It has come at last." She looked at her brother, then at René. "Oh, if I were only a boy!" she breathed.

"Come, now, that will do, Connie," said Vincent.

"There will be hard work for women," said René. "Terrible work for women."

The girl put her hands over her face and shuddered, but quickly recovering herself she said, speaking hurriedly:

"Yes, terrible work for women. More terrible than yours. It is easier to fight, but it must be done. It will be done. How can we begin, Vincent?"

"On bandages and blankets and socks and that sort of thing, I guess," replied Vincent cheerfully. "You'll get your orders very soon. But I must get your horse, René, if you must be off."

After his departure silence fell upon the two.

"You were so good to Vincent," said Constance, drawing nearer to René and looking up at him with soft blue eyes. "I wanted to know you to tell you how I—how we just loved you for it. It meant so much to Mother, to us all. It might have been so terrible for him and for us all. And now you are going away," she continued. "Off to the war. But you will remember that we often have spoken of you—and that we were grateful to you and —and—oh, I will say it, we may not have another chance, I did love you for it. Here's Mother. I have just told René—" her

mother raised her eyes in surprise—"why not, Mother? You know we have always called him René, and I have just told him how we loved him for what he did for Vincent."

"Yes, my dear boy," said her mother, "we want you to know that. Your mother will be——"

"I have no mother," said René. "No one but an uncle. A fine old boy he is. A soldier."

"No sisters?"

"No—no. No mother, no sisters, no women to weep for me, thank God," said René with a little laugh.

"You have now, René," said Constance gently. "There will be two here who will think of you. Won't we, Mother?"

"Yes, my dear. We will think of you, dear boy, and pray for you. I hope never to weep for you. Ah! ah! this war!"

René put out his hand to her. "Thank you," he said very earnestly. "It will help me, make me a better soldier, I believe, to remember that you will be thinking of me."

"Yes, and praying for you, René."

René bowed silently. An unexpected rush of emotion deprived him of words.

"There's my horse," he said after a moment or two of silence. "And again let me thank you and say good-bye."

"Good-bye, dear René. Let me give you a mother's kiss," said Mrs. Howard. There were no tears in her eyes, hardly a tremor in her voice.

"And me too," said Constance looking up at René with shy blue eyes and lifting up her face to him. A deep red burned through René's tan. He stooped and kissed her, a new and tender emotion stirring in his heart. Mother and sister he had never known. Silently he shook hands once more and left the room.

He found Vincent waiting him, with some difficulty keeping in order a beautiful jet-black horse, whose lines suggested the Kentucky blue grass racing blood.

"What a beauty!" cried René. "I shall take good care of him, Howard."

"He is inclined to be a little frisky at first," said Vincent. "He is very fast, but he has never done any long journey."

"I shall take good care of him and bring him back to you all

right," promised René as he shook hands in farewell. As he rode away he turned to look at the two standing in the doorway, waving to him.

"God give us strength to fight," he prayed, "that our women may be kept safe."

CHAPTER XXXII

WAR AND WOMEN

THAT same afternoon, in an open rowboat General Brock, with his aide-de-camp Captain Glegg, and his brigade major, Evans, set off across Lake Ontario and arrived in the evening at Fort George, which he had constituted his headquarters.

About the same time in the evening René, having dispatched his business with Black Hawk, rode Lightning into the Brookeses' stable yard, gave him into the charge of the stable boy, and proceeded to the house. In response to his knock the door was opened by Mrs. Brookes.

"René!" she cried with a quick glance at his face, "what is it?"

"The colonel," replied René. "May I speak to the colonel?"

"Come in, my boy. You look thoroughly done up. Come in and rest."

"Not a bit of it," answered René, "but I must see the colonel at once."

At this moment the colonel entered the room, followed by Edward, and greeted René warmly.

"I have a message to you, sir. General Brock presents his compliments and desires you to meet him at Fort George this evening."

"This evening? What is it? Is it——" He glanced at his wife.

"Is it war, René?" asked Mrs. Brookes, her face very pale but very composed.

"It is war, declared eight days ago. The general says we may expect immediate invasion."

"Let them come, say I," said the colonel.

Edward stood silent and with face unmoved.

"Colonel Brookes, may I have a horse from you? I am riding to Amherstburg. My horse—it is Vincent Howard's—is quite used up. I have ridden from York by the Grand River."

"Edward, saddle King," ordered the colonel.

"You have ridden from York?" said Mrs. Brookes. "When have you eaten?"

"As I rode along, Mrs. Brookes. I had breakfast at eight this morning with the general."

"You must stay for supper, then," she insisted.

"Thank you, I cannot stay, I must ride. Every minute is precious."

Colonel Brookes interposed. "Mrs. Brookes will prepare you a dish of tea. No, no, listen to me. I am an old campaigner. This would be the general's orders were he here. A man needs every ounce of strength in war. A man, like an army, moves on his stomach. Fifteen minutes and you shall be on your way."

With his eyes upon the door and his ears alert for a light-falling footstep René sat down at the table.

"When did the word get here?" inquired the colonel.

"Last night in a private letter to Mr. Thomas Clark, the Astor agent at Niagara, the announcement came."

"And the general was there?"

"No, sir, I carried it to him at York."

"Last night? You rode all night and to-day? Young man, you are the sort of runner General Brock would approve."

Throughout the fifteen minutes during which René took his tea the colonel plied him with questions, René answering with his lips, but his eyes were on the door and his ears alert. Would she come before he left? His heart was sick for one look at her. And yet, what use? She had been so "kind" to him the last time they had met. Aye, too kind. That was the hopelessness of it. Yet in the old days, ah, those dear old days, she had been more than kind. But everything was changed since then. Eustace was mad about her, and he was the right sort for her. Young Vincent Howard too, and Lieutenant Selby. They were all mad about her. How could they help it? And they were all her class. He in his buck-skins! Well, thank God, there was the war. Meantime, he was answering the questions put to him quite clearly.

Under Mrs. Brookes's persuasion and in obedience to the colonel's orders René had made a substantial supper.

"Now I shall see if your horse is ready," said the colonel, passing out of the room.

"Have you heard from Hubert?" inquired Mrs. Brookes eagerly when the colonel had gone. "Oh, René! will he come home at once? If he does not come now he can never come." Her fingers were writhing pitifully.

"Mrs. Brookes, don't worry about Hubert. He will not fail you."

"But his last letter in the *Guardian* was so very American, so much on their side. His father is terribly stirred up over it. He is really breaking his heart. Indeed, we are all——" Her voice broke in a sob.

"Mrs. Brookes, do not do that," entreated René. "Hubert is as loyal as any Canadian living. He will do his duty. He will not fail you."

"And Charlotte feels so dreadful about him, too. She agrees with her father. She thinks he is all wrong. Of course, without bitterness. I am sorry you will miss her. She has ridden down to Queenstown. She—I ought to tell you. Eustace had a letter only this week from his home. His elder brother has died. He will be Lord Glendale some day, and he wants Charlotte to marry him."

René found his lips suddenly dry. He felt a tingling in his finger tips. Though he had known that this girl was not for him, yet somehow this announcement found him unprepared. He had never quite surrendered her. Slowly he lifted his teacup already empty, and drained it again.

"Lucky chap, Eustace!" he said, "and a splendid fellow. Charlotte will be very happy. Of course, there are many who would be glad—to—win Charlotte—there is no one good enough for her—but I am sure she will be very happy. Eustace is a splendid chap. The general trusts him. He is a trained soldier, you know"; and thus he kept the stream of words flowing as he rose from the table and made to depart.

"Good-bye, Mrs. Brookes. Do not fret about Hubert," he said. "He will do the right thing. You will—tell Charlotte—I mean I'm awfully glad Charlotte is going to be happy. After all, that's what we all want. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, René," said Mrs. Brookes, a soft tenderness in her face and in her voice. "You know I would have rejoiced over Charlotte—if things had happened differently. Oh, my boy!" she cried suddenly as she put her arms about his neck, "I wish it had been you, René," she whispered, kissing him. "You are so much more my own boy. You have been so good—so good—so loyal—so good to Hubert. Good-bye. We do not know what is coming to us all. God knows—I will pray for you every day, René—when I pray for my own."

The flowing tide of her emotion almost unmanned him.

"Thank you, Mrs. Brookes, thank you," he said gently. "Remember, if you need a man's help at any time, think of me as one of your sons. I have no other mother."

"Oh, René!" she sobbed. "Dear René, we shall never forget you."

He passed out of the house and found the colonel waiting and Edward holding the colonel's best horse, King.

"He is not so fast as your Gypsy, René," said Edward, "but he will stay with you. There are three hundred miles in him if you ask for them."

"I shall get a relay, if I can, and I shall take good care of him, Edward. Good-bye, Edward, I shall see you again." He turned to the colonel.

"Colonel Brookes," he said, "I had a letter from Hubert the other day."

The colonel made an impatient gesture, forbidding further speech. "Do not speak of him—I won't hear of him," he said. "He is——"

"Colonel Brookes, I have something that I feel it is my duty to say to you." René's voice was calm and steady, the voice of a man speaking to his equal.

In spite of his rage the colonel was impressed.

"We are at war, Colonel Brookes. What will come to us, none of us know, but we cannot afford to be anything but true, and we cannot allow our minds to be clouded by mere feeling. I know Hubert better to-day than you do. I lived with him for nearly eight months. His attitude toward the war is my own. He fails to see what to me and to you seems clear. But he is as loyal as I

or Edward here or yourself. Let me finish, please. Hubert will be coming back any day now. He has a right to come back and take his place beside any Loyalist in the country. I know what I am saying, and if any man except his father throws suspicion on Hubert Brookes's loyalty," here he lifted his hand high, "I swear by the Almighty God he shall answer to me for it."

The colonel stood staring into the boy's face in a kind of dazed surprise. This was no boy. His manner, voice, bearing were those of a man. Unable to find words, he stood still, staring in René's face.

"Good-bye, sir, and thank you for King," said René, offering his hand.

"Good-bye, sir," said the colonel, seizing his hand in a fierce grip. "Good-bye! God knows, I pray you are right. But, at any rate, from my heart I thank you, René."

"Good-bye, René," said Edward. "You have done a good bit of work just now. I agree with you entirely, but I am only a boy yet to my father."

"Boy! boy!" said his father huskily. "The day has come when, no matter what your old father thinks, your country will count you men and as men you will respond." Together they stood watching René as he rode down the lane.

René had reached the forks where the short cut for Queenstown diverged from the main road. Hark! up the road from Queenstown came the rhythmic beat of a cantering horse. He moved quietly into the side trail and stood there sheltered among the trees. What should he do? He must act quickly. Should he let her pass? He would give his soul to hold her only once more in his arms. But of what avail? Why keep tearing at this wound? Besides, it would only distress her to meet him again. She would be "kind." Of course she would be "kind." But could he bear her "kindness"? Still, there was the war. He might never see her again. She would be grieved to know that he had passed her so close without a word. He could not be such a coward.

King settled the matter for him with a long, loud whinny for his stable mate. René set his teeth. He would see her, speak to her kindly, tenderly. She would never guess. In another instant he was at her side.

"René!" she cried aloud, eagerly reaching out her hand toward him. "Oh, it is good to see you! But what is it, René? You look——"

"It is terrible news, Charlotte," he said quietly. "It is war."

"War, René?" she echoed.

"Yes, Charlotte," he replied, holding her hands fast in his, glad of the turn which his word had given to their thoughts. "It is war, Charlotte. I carried the news last night to the general."

"To York?" cried the girl, "and you are here to-night?"

"Yes, I had two good horses. This is King."

"King?" she said. She looked vacantly at the horse. "Oh, yes, King! Yes, I see." Then, after a moment's silence, "Where are you going now, René?"

"To Queenstown first, then to Amherstburg. Now I cannot delay, for every minute is important. I carry dispatches for the general, you know."

"Dispatches?"

"Yes, dispatches for Colonel Nichol at Queenstown and for Colonel St. George at Malden."

"Malden?"

"Yes," he replied. "Yes, near Amherstburg, two hundred and fifty miles or so west. Now I must go, Charlotte."

"Yes, René, you must go." Her face was white. Her dark eyes staring at him in an uncomprehending gaze.

He threw a swift glance at her white face and forgot his own pain. She thinking of Eustace!

"We must be brave, Charlotte," he said. "Eustace will be on the staff, you know."

"Eustace? Eustace? Oh, yes."

"He is a lucky chap, Charlotte." René laughed gayly. "I wish him every joy. You tell him that for me, Charlotte, when you see him."

"Tell him?" The girl's face still wore a puzzled and dazed expression.

"When will you be back, René?"

"Within a week or so, I think. I must go."

"Yes! You must go, René. Oh, yes! You must go!"

"We have all to be very brave, Charlotte," said René, deeply moved at what he read in her face.

"Yes, brave, René!" The words came slowly. "Oh, yes—we must be brave. We must be brave. Yes, René, I will try." Her voice died in a whisper.

"Now, I really must be gone, Charlotte," he said, holding out his hand. "Good-bye."

"Oh, René! You—oh—good-bye!" she cried, clutching her horse's mane with one hand and reaching far out to him with the other, making as wide a space between them as possible.

"Oh, René, René—oh, good-bye!" She tore her hand from his; her horse swerved and was off at a gallop.

"Well, thank the good God that is over!" groaned René, "and over for good. Another moment and I should have played the cad and dragged her from that horse of hers. But I didn't do it. Thank God, I didn't do it! Oh, God! Remember that! I didn't do it!"

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FIERY CROSS

In less than half an hour René strode into Colonel Nichol's store at Queenstown. The light was dim, the store full of dark shadows. A silence fell on the group of men lounging within as René entered. Most of them were of American origin and enrolled in Colonel Nichol's First Norfolk Battalion.

Those who knew him greeted him with a word or a nod, then followed his movements with curious eyes. There was a certain mystery attached to this young man. He lived apart from their everyday life. He even spent weeks among the Indians. He was a hunter and a trapper, a trader with an uncanny gift for shrewd bargaining. An athlete. As a runner he could tire out a horse in a day's run. He was a youth of wild and untamed passions, yet untouched by the desires and lusts that so frequently characterize the ordinary man. He moved toward the counter where Colonel Nichol was serving a customer, greeted him quietly, and stood waiting his turn.

"What can I do for you, René?" said Colonel Nichol when he was at leisure.

"I want to look at some door hinges for a root house."

"Come this way," replied Colonel Nichol, leading him to the back of the store where the light was dim. There René delivered his message from the general.

"The general wishes you to meet him to-night at Fort George."

Colonel Nichol was a man of few words.

"All right," he said. "What else can I do for you?"

"You can let me have a little sugar, tea, biscuits, cheese," adding in a low voice, "I ride to Amherstburg." He showed Colonel Nichol a copy of the Astor letter and copies of the general's orders.

The colonel was full of questions, which René was able to answer satisfactorily.

"Glad you have come. I want a man who knows Indians to look over Detroit for me to-morrow."

"To-night is better," said René.

"You have ridden four hundred miles," said the colonel.

"A bath and a sleep and I'll be fit, sir," replied René.

"Right. You will need a pass. Those Indians on Bois Blanc are sharp and short in their methods. The pass word is 'Tecumseh.' Handcock will show you the way."

Handcock was summoned.

"Handcock, you have looked after this officer's horse?"

"Yes, sir," replied Handcock, saluting sharply.

"All right, show him the way to the island."

"Yes, sir. My chum Dean knows the trail."

René found his horse sluiced down, rubbed dry, cool, eating contentedly, and bandaged to the hock.

"Handcock, you know a horse and how to handle him, I see," said René.

"Yes, sir. I'm an old cavalry man myself. I see my chum Dean, sir. I shall get 'im."

He brought Dean to the horse lines and explained what was wanted. Dean was a slow-moving, slow-speaking chap, tall, lanky, with long arms, long legs, and powerful shoulders, a bushman from his birth, famous with the rifle.

"Dean, you know the trail to the Boy Blank?" said Handcock.

"I guess," drawled Dean, "but I ain't foolin' round there much. 'Tain't healthy."

"That's all right, Dean. This officer 'as a pass and wants to get there. Show 'im the trail, eh?"

"I guess," drawled Dean, swinging off across the parade ground.

"How many Indians on Bois Blanc?" inquired René.

"Dunno, sir. Nobody does except Colonel Elliott and Tecumseh. Danged close they are. Quite a gang, and more comin' every day."

As they moved along the lines René was delighted with the evidence on every hand of strict military discipline. A battalion was on parade doing evolutions.

"Sloppy, eh?" said Handcock to his friend in disgust.

"Say, them ain't no Grenadier Guards," said Dean. "Them's militia."

Handcock sniffed.

"Look a-here, darn you for a Cockney hoss thief! You leave them militia be. Put 'em in the bush with rifles and they'll turn your Guards into crow's meat quicker'n chain lightnin'."

"I say you're a Yank, by the blowin' of you and——"

"Don't you call me a Yank or I'll twist your neck," drawled Dean, and with amazing celerity he flung an encircling arm about Handcock's neck and held him like a vise.

"'Ere! I say, old top! not quite so hexpeditious with your claws."

"Here's the trail, sir," said Dean. "We don't go any nearer without a pass."

"Thank you," said René. "See you on my way back, Handcock."

"Yes, sir," said he, saluting.

Dean nodded his farewell. "Watch out for them wildcats," he said.

At the river bank René was halted by an Indian with a rifle.

"Show your pass," he said.

René handed him Colonel St. George's letter.

"All right, sir, I shall get you a canoe," he said.

In answer to a low whistle an Indian in a canoe shot out from behind overhanging bushes.

"This Indian will hand you over to the guards on the other side," said the sentry.

"You speak good English."

"Yes, sir, I work with Colonel Elliott. In the department."

As René took his place in the canoe he asked the Indian in the Mohawk tongue if he knew the Wyandot encampment.

"Huh, me Wyandot," grunted the Indian.

"You know Chief Wahcheeka," said René using the Wyan-

dot speech. "I want him. He is my brother." The man's dark face lighted up with a smile.

"Good," he said. "I will show Wahcheeka's brother the trail."

As the canoe touched the shore of the island Bois Blanc an Indian, rifle in hand, stepped from the shadows.

"Ho! No come," he grunted.

"Tecumseh!" said René. The Wyandot from the canoe spoke, asking that René be guided to the tent of the Wyandot chief. A low whistle brought two other Indians from the bush. To them the sentry gave instructions, and after a short walk René found himself in Wahcheeka's presence.

After warm greetings the Wyandot inquired, "What can Wahcheeka do for his blood brother?"

"Wahcheeka, it is war. Ten days ago."

"Good," said the Indian, utterly unmoved.

"I want to visit the big fort, go through, see everything."

After some moments' silence Wahcheeka said:

"Good. Senecas visit the fort with meat. We will be Senecas. We will bring deer meat to the soldiers."

"What about sentries?"

"Wah!" exclaimed the chief with a gesture of contempt. "They are old women asleep in the sun."

It was even so. The Seneca hunters passed through the fort gate without hindrance, sold their meat, slouched unchallenged whither they would, watched the weird evolutions of an infantry battalion in a quiet corner, cooked their meals, smoked and slept undisturbed. As the afternoon was wearing on, a troop of mounted men rode in through the gate. Kentuckians, they were, tall fellows sitting their horses like centaurs, a dashing body of riders. At their head was an officer, splendidly mounted and handling his men smartly.

"Ha! This is something different, eh?" exclaimed René. "Fine men, eh?" Wahcheeka made no reply. René glanced at him.

"What's the matter, Wahcheeka?" he asked.

"Tippecanoe!" said the chief, his face black with fury. "Come, no look." He set off for the gate. As he spoke the troop wheeled and came thundering down toward them, their officer in front.

As they drew near, René flung himself face down on the sod, and so remained till the troop had passed.

"Come," he said moving toward the gate. "I know that man. It was Gresham. He must not see me."

In the evening they made their way down to the river, slipped their canoe into the water, and made for the island.

"Well, what do you think of these soldiers, Wahcheeka?" asked René.

"Huh!" grunted Wahcheeka, flinging his open palm away from him, the Indian's gesture of contempt. "Little dogs!"

"What about the cavalry?"

The Indian's face grew dark with passion.

"No tree, good!" said the chief, speaking English. "In bush, no good—Tippecanoe no tree, kill much Indian—Prophet big squaw, no good—Tecumseh say fight Indian way—good—kill much Long Knives."

"That's where the Indians made their mistake, Wahcheeka. They fought in the open," said René.

"No more, no more. Tecumseh say no more."

"Never again in the open?"

"Huh!" grunted Wahcheeka. Suddenly he sprang to his feet, snatched his tomahawk from his belt, flung it high in the air, caught it, whirled it round his head, and shook it toward the fort, his face convulsed with fury.

"Tippecanoe!" he yelled. "Wa-a-ah!" and relapsed into sullen silence.

"White soldiers afraid Indian," said Wahcheeka with a grim smile after long silence. "Much afraid, good!"

It was true. Everywhere that day they had caught the note of terror among the crowds of noncombatants gathered into the fort.

René could not help shuddering as he thought of the possibility of those American Indians, their hearts aflame with vengeful fires of fury long pent up, being let loose some day upon their age-long foe at whose hands they had suffered such terrible wrong.

In parting Wahcheeka laid both hands upon René's breast. "Blood brother," he said, pointing to the moon shining through

the tree-tops, "while the moon shines we will fight together, die together." He pressed René's hand to his heart in farewell. "Some day soon."

Colonel St. George listened with grave face to René's report.

"A strong fort—parapet twenty feet, palisades of twenty-inch cedar—a ditch twelve feet broad, six feet deep—thirty-seven guns."

"How many men?"

"Difficult to say. Twenty-five hundred—some say more."

"Discipline?"

"None. Hull is no soldier—his officers distrust him—detest him. More than that, he has a thousand or more noncombatants—old men, women, children, all terrified of the Indians. They know that the Shawnees, Miamis, Pottawatomies are longing for the chance to wipe out the memory of Tippecanoe and all the rest in blood."

"It would be hell if they ever got inside that fort—hell would be nothing to it."

René rose to go.

"Not setting off to-night?" said the colonel.

"Afraid I must, sir. Things are critical at headquarters."

"The general works you hard."

"Not as hard as he works himself," said René warmly. "He is a wonder. He shames us all, sir."

"He's not afraid to ask a lot of us here—seven hundred men with no defences to hold over twenty-five hundred. Can seven hundred hold twenty-five hundred, I ask you?"

"Depends upon the men, sir."

"What men? Theirs?"

"No, sir. Young men and——" René hesitated.

"And?" The colonel looked hard at him.

"Their officers, sir," answered René boldly. "Pardon me, sir. It's the way he makes you feel. I believe that General Brock with his Forty-ninth alone could hold those twenty-five hundred, and with a battery of guns he could annihilate them." René's voice rang with a clear note of confidence.

"Seven hundred men against twenty-five hundred with cavalry and guns," mused the colonel.

"It's quality, sir, which means discipline and spirit. Your men are fighting for homes, wives, children, country."

"Gad, young fellow! You've said something there," said the colonel. "Well, you can say to the general, anyway, that when he comes, living or dead he'll find us here."

At the horse lines René found Handcock rubbing at his horse and hissing like a small steam engine.

"How is the horse, Handcock?"

"Fit, sir. You needn't be afraid to press him."

"Thank you, Handcock. He looks fit. Well, you'll be fighting soon, I guess."

"Yes, sir! I've 'eard so, sir. The sooner the better for us, sir."

"I'm no soldier, Handcock, but it looks as if these works wouldn't give much protection."

"No, sir—we will march hout and meet 'em, sir. At the Canard River, sir, I believe."

"You'll hold 'em, Handcock? Seven hundred against twenty-five hundred, eh?"

"Well, sir, I've seen worse hodds in my day. We'll 'ave a jolly good try at 'em, hanyway, sir."

"I just bet you will, Handcock, and hold 'em too. Well, good-bye and good luck."

"Same to you, sir," replied Handcock, saluting stiffly, then turning away to duty and whistling a merry tune. It was all in a day's work to Handcock.

"Seven hundred like you, my lad, well led, would hold that mob under that general till the crack of doom," he said to himself as he set King's face toward Queenstown.

CHAPTER XXXIV

ST. JOSEPH'S ISLE

ON HIS return journey, one day out from Amherstburg René was surprised to meet Harry Marcle, apparently pushing his horse, Major, to the limit of his strength.

"Hello, René!" cried Marcle. "Where in the world have you been?"

"I had some business with the Indians at Grand River and at Amherstburg," replied René briefly. "You have no message for me, have you?"

"No, I am closing up some business in the West before we get busy with the war."

With a brief farewell René pursued his journey. A day's journey from Queenstown he was met by a runner bringing a letter for him from General Brock, which letter instructed him to proceed with the dispatches enclosed to Captain Roberts at St. Joseph's Isle with all possible speed. Without a moment's delay, after giving an acknowledgment to the runner, René faced again toward Amherstburg, which he made after two days' hard riding. His first inquiry was as to Marcle, who it appears had reported to Colonel St. George, had shown an order from General Brock to cross at Fort Detroit, and had left for Sandwich en route to the fort early that morning. He had not yet returned, and there was no report as to his whereabouts.

"Did he go to Detroit?" inquired René.

"That I cannot tell you," replied the colonel. "The Indian patrol will doubtless know. I shall send and make inquiry."

"I should prefer if you would give me an order to cross the river, Colonel St. George. I know the Indians, and I think I can find out what I want from them."

Receiving his order, René at once proceeded to find his Wyandot friend Wahcheeka and from inquiries conducted by that chief

soon had a complete record of Marcle's movements. He had gone to Detroit, he had met there with a trapper, who with a canoe and four Indians had paddled that morning up the river, had boarded the schooner *Caledonia,* and sailed northward. The Indians were under the impression that the *Caledonia* was making for Fort Mackinaw on the American side.

"We must get that trapper," said René. "At all costs we must get him. Wahcheeka, I want you to get me the two best Indian paddlers you have, your best canoe with the necessary provisions, three rifles, and lots of ammunition."

To his extreme regret Wahcheeka's duties prevented him from being one of the party. But within an hour René was afloat in the best canoe in Tecumseh's flotilla and with two of the hardest and swiftest paddlers which the whole contingent could provide. In a leisurely manner, as if on a fishing expedition, with René lying flat in the bottom of the canoe, the Indians made their way past the fort. Once out of sight of the fort the three paddles swung into their long hard stern chase.

Two days and two nights, sleeping by turns, landing only to "boil tea" and to dump from their canoe the water taken from the combs of the whitecaps, they kept up the chase. Before dawn of the third day they came up with the *Caledonia,* becalmed in a little bay on the east shore of Lake Huron. Silently boarding the ship, they found a deserted deck and the sails lazily flapping in a gentle land breeze.

Neither René nor his Indians had any knowledge of the art of handling a craft so large, but they had sailed fishing smacks. It took but a few minutes to haul the sails taut to place and to set the ship moving merrily along the eastern shore of Lake Huron and in the general direction of St. Joseph's Isle.

René was in exultant mood. He had secured his schooner, and if the breeze should increase, as was likely, they ought to make St. Joseph's Isle by sundown, and the day following should see floating over Fort Mackinaw the Union Jack.

His pleasant reverie was broken by a rumbling roar which became intelligible in a bellowing stream of profanity.

"Who the blankety-blank are you, and what the blankety-blank do ye think ye're doin' wid the blankety-blank ship, annyway?"

Turning round, René saw emerging from the companionway a form of monstrous bulk clad in shirt and trousers, his huge head adorned with an aureole of fiery red hair and whiskers through which gleamed a pair of fierce light blue eyes.

And behind this terrifying form stood another man of remarkable appearance in trapper guise, tall, lanky, with sandy hair and chin whiskers stained with tobacco juice, an enormous mouth and long hooked nose. At his back some four or five Indians began to appear from the hold.

The fiery-headed one stood blinking through his tangled maze of fiery whiskers in growing wrath.

"Now thin, speak up, will ye! Who are ye? Be the powers, for two chaws of tabaccy I'd break y'r sulphurously described back in two pieces."

René explained his mission. He had dispatches from General Brock which must be immediately delivered to Captain Roberts at St. Joseph's Isle, and he had a letter from Captain Barclay ordering the captain of the *Caledonia* to carry those dispatches to their destination with all possible speed.

"Guess ye're in bad luck, young feller," drawled the lanky man. "This 'ere ship is hired for a trip to Mackinaw, and to Mackinaw she's agoin'. Captain Fogarty, are you goin' to stand for a young snipe like that climbin' aboard an' takin' y'r ship out of y'r hands?"

"Captain Fogarty, I apologize for climbing aboard without permission, but my orders were urgent, and I expect that your orders from Captain Barclay will make it all right."

"Carson," said the captain, "mebbe he's got orders. Let's see your blank orders, annyway."

"Captain Fogarty, let me speak to you in your cabin."

"Look out what ye're doin'," cautioned Carson. "He's got pistols in his belt, and his men have rifles. By the livin' jumpin' Jemimy, if he came aboard my ship I'd blow him to hell."

As they spoke, Carson's hand moved quickly toward his belt, but before he could draw, René's pistol was looking him wickedly in the face.

"Move your hand and you'll drop on that deck," said René in a quiet voice. "Now, listen to me. This pistol works on a hair

trigger and never misses. Put your hands up over your head and keep them there. Take his pistols from him," he added to one of his Indians," and give them to the captain."

"Now, Captain, I'll show you my orders from your superior officer. He will be sorry to hear how you treated his messenger, and you will be sorry later."

The captain was obviously impressed.

"Come down into my cabin," he growled. "Carson, keep her headin' as she is."

"I'm comin' down too," said Carson. "I've got some rights here, I guess."

The three men proceeded to the cabin.

"There's your letter, Captain Fogarty, from Captain Barclay," said René, handing him Barclay's orders. The captain slowly and with obvious difficulty read the letter.

"He says I've got to go straight with this young feller to St. Joseph's Isle, Carson."

"Let's look at that letter," ejaculated Carson. "Do you know Captain Barclay's fist?"

Fogarty shook his head, "I ain't much good at reading handwrite."

"Well, I know it, and that ain't Barclay's fist unless he was drunk when he wrote it."

René ignored him, and taking a sealed packet from his pocket, handed it to Captain Fogarty.

"Here are General Brock's dispatches to Captain Roberts at St. Joseph's Isle," he said.

Captain Fogarty turned over the sealed packet in his hand, much puzzled.

"Oh, shucks!" cried Carson contemptuously, "sealed orders is easy. Any feller can get 'em. Look a' here Fogarty, are you goin' to let this young cock fool you? He climbs aboard your ship without a by-your-leave. He bully-rags you with his guns and rifles. I hired this ship. She's mine for this trip. You're an honest man. Why don't he come to Mackinaw first? It ain't but a very little out of his way. Then let him go on to St. Joseph's. No! He's got to go to St. Joseph's first. Mighty fishy, says I. Haven't you got

any guts? Why don't you fire him off your ship if he don't obey your orders? Whose ship is it, anyway? Fire this skunk, say I, and sail your ship wherever you want to. That's my word." And Carson stumped up the companionway to the deck.

"By the living cripes!" shouted Captain Fogarty, "it's what I'll do. Take yer choice. You can come with me to Mackinaw or get off this ship. You can't bully me."

"Captain Fogarty," replied René very earnestly and very gravely, "I am not trying to bully you. Here are my pistols."

"Keep your guns, I don't want them," shouted Fogarty, "but I want to tell ye——"

"Let me speak, Captain Fogarty. This matter is far too serious for anything but reasonable talk. Listen to me, or you will certainly be sorry for this all your life. You will lose your ship, and you will go to prison."

"Who are you, annyway?" roared Fogarty. "How do I know you?"

"Captain, let me show you," replied René, still speaking in grave and earnest tones. "Can any of your men talk the Indian lingo, Wyandot or Shawnee? Bring him down and my Indians too. Let him ask them who I am. I won't say a word."

The captain was impressed with René's tone and manner, but he was sorely puzzled. He pondered for a few moments; then up through the companionway he roared, "Jacques, come down here right away."

In answer to René's call his two Indians followed Jacques down into the cabin.

"Now, then," said René, "let Jacques ask my men anything you like, and you," he continued, turning to the Indians, "must speak the truth. No forked tongue." Thereupon René turned his back and so remained during the interview that followed.

Jacques, a French Canadian half-breed, proved a clever interpreter. His questions drew from the Indians information that amazed and impressed Captain Fogarty. They were Wyandots serving under Roundhead, the Wyandot chief. They had known René and hunted with him for many moons. He was a big hunter. Oh, yes, a very big hunter. Here a smile cracked the dark

masklike face of the Indian. "Ho! He make ver big hunting on Miami," said the Indian in pidgin English.

His Indian friend grunted with a silent body-shaking laugh.

"What do ye mean by that, ye cackling lunatic?" roared Fogarty.

The Indian hesitated.

"Tell him to speak out his heart," said René. "To tell everything he knows."

And the Indian did. With ever growing animation and with much silent laughter he told the tale of René's trading exploit on the Miami.

Fogarty became much excited. He slammed his big fist hard upon the table. "Now, then, be all the saints, I've heard that same story, and are ye the man that done it? Bedad, that's enough for me!" He made to dash up to the deck.

"Wait, Captain," said René. "I have something to tell you now that I could not tell you before. Let these men go."

The captain waved Jacques and the Indians away up to the deck.

"Captain Fogarty, you're a loyal Canadian and a Canadian officer. So am I. We must stand together in this war."

"War!" said the captain in a hushed voice. "What the——?"

René held up his hand. "I couldn't tell you till I was sure of you."

Then René poured into his wondering ears all he knew about the war. "And these dispatches to Captain Roberts, I believe, carry the orders for the capture of Fort Mackinaw. I have an idea that Carson knows this. That's why we must not go to Mackinaw first. Captain, we must stand by our country."

"Howly Mary! What else? It's to St. Joseph's we will go." He dashed up to the deck, René following, glanced at the sky, shook his head. "Begorrah, we'll be goin' where we can, I'm thinkin'," he said. "Yonder's a snorter piling up in the northwest there. A ring-tail snorter!"

The captain proved a sound prophet. Out of the northwest the storm broke upon them with appalling fury. For two days they were driven across the raging white-capped plain of Lake Huron, till, with her mainmast, spars, and sails carried away and her

hold half full of water, the *Caledonia* staggered drunkenly into the lee of an island in the far southwest corner of the lake. There they remained for two days, patching up her wounds and refitting her with masts and spars. Two days more and she was sailing briskly on a northeasterly course within sight of Mackinaw Island.

Carson was jubilant. "We'll get you to St. Joseph's to-morrow night, all right," he said to René. "We won't be long at Mackinaw."

"Can't be helped, I guess," replied René. "I've got to go where the ship goes."

The captain was at the wheel.

"You're takin' quite a sweep, ain't you?" said Carson. "That's all good water right into Mackinaw from here."

"Can't be too careful," said the captain. "Ye niver know what ye may run into. G'wan down, Carson, you and René, and get your dinners. We'll celebrate a glorious finish for this tempestuous voyage. I'll be orderin' something special for yez, so I will, and I'll follow yez later."

"All right, Cap," cried Carson in high spirits. "Ye're the stuff. Come on, young feller. We'll see what the captain has for us."

The dinner was prolonged beyond all bounds. The captain had ordered for his guests sundry choice brands of liquor kept for high days and holidays. René proved an interesting companion. He was full of tales of his experiences with the Indians. He discoursed fluently and at length upon the war situation on the Continent. Hours passed, and still they sat at table, René taking care the while to keep his companion's glass full.

In the middle of the afternoon the captain joined them.

"We'll soon be in, eh, Cap?" said Carson in a jubilant tone.

"She's doing well, and the breeze is holding good," replied the captain. "We'll drink to the *Caledonia,* bedad, as stout a little ship as ever sailed the Lakes."

"Right you are, Cap. I thought once she was going down, but she's a dandy. A jim dandy cracker. Here's to her!"

They drank the toast with enthusiasm.

"And here's to her captain, no better on the Lake, says I."

The second toast was drunk with equal enthusiasm.

The captain proceeded with his dinner, keeping his guests with him, proving a generous host and a sturdy drinker. After the captain had finished his meal Carson was laid carefully away in his bunk to enjoy a night's repose, undisturbed by the anxieties attendant upon the negotiating of the sinuous waterways stretching between Fort Mackinaw and St. Joseph's Isle.

It was well on in the forenoon of the following day, as the *Caledonia* was threading her way through a labyrinth of lovely islets toward the port of St. Joseph's Isle, that Carson appeared on deck.

The captain greeted him with a cheery word. "I didn't want to disturb ye," he said, "and after losing all the time we did for the young man here, and as the wind was on our back, I thought we might as well slip on to St. Joseph's first and so——"

"St. Joseph's!" shouted Carson. "St. Joseph's!" For some moments he gazed dumbfounded at the captain, whose face was wreathed in an ingratiating smile. Carson stood speechless. Indeed all speech seemed inadequate to the situation. His hands dropped quietly to his hips. His belt was empty. Without a word he turned and walked away to the stern of the ship and stood looking over into the blue water slipping quietly away.

After a time he came back to the captain and said quietly: "Captain, you've played me a dirty truck. You won't be long here, I suppose. We've lost a lot of time, and with me every day counts."

"And that same is true, Carson, ivery day counts," said the captain with a laugh.

"About half an hour or so here, I guess, Captain?"

"It dipinds, me boy," replied the captain, rolling his brogue in a joyous way. The captain was in high spirits. "I'll be afther inquirin' av Captain Roberts about it."

"Don't see what Captain Roberts has to do with it, Captain," said Carson wrathfully. "I chartered this boat, and I'm paying for it, and paying good money, too."

"Ye are, me boy," replied the captain slapping his knee to emphasize his rolling laugh.

"And I didn't charter it to get to this port. I'm going to Mackinaw."

"Ye are, dear man, ye are." And again the captain's laugh came like a low roll of thunder. "Ye're goin' to Mackinaw, sure enough."

Carson looked at him somewhat dubiously.

"I don't see what ye're laughing at, Captain," he said, suspicion in his voice.

"No, ye don't, sure enough ye don't. Ha-ha-ha! Ho-ho! but ye will, ye will, me boy! Listen till him, René. Oh, ye're a cure, Carson, so ye are."

The captain was now quite helpless with laughter.

"But here we are and here's Captain Roberts himself," added the captain, pointing to a tall, slight soldierly man in military uniform, who came stepping briskly toward the dock.

"Hello there, Captain, and how's the world?"

"Whirling a bit fast, Captain Fogarty. Oh, hello there, René! The very man I want to see."

"Come aboard, then, Captain," said Fogarty.

Down in the cabin Captain Roberts grasped René with both hands. "Tell me, is it war?"

"It has been war for exactly twenty-six days, Captain Roberts."

"My God! I don't know what to do," replied the captain. "Orders one day! Countermanded the next day! Fresh orders the third day! A letter has just come from the Governor General himself, urging moderation, forbearance."

"This dispatch, Captain, I think will give you your latest orders."

"Wait a minute, gintlemen," says Captain Fogarty. Impressively he brought a table and glasses from a cabinet and set them upon the table. "Now thin, gintlemen, 'Here's to the war and to the good old counthry and to our land Canada.' " After the toast was drunk Roberts tore off the wrappers and read eagerly and rapidly the dispatches.

Then, turning to René, he grasped him by both arms. "At last!" he said, "at last! Read it and hurry up about it." He thrust the dispatch into René's hands, who read the message in a low voice to Captain Fogarty.

"Now, Captain Fogarty, you know," said René.

"I do. I do. And by the everlasting saints it is meself was the fool, but I did the best I could, didn't I? Ye'll bear me out in that?"

"You did, Captain Fogarty, and I shall so report to Captain Barclay when I see him."

"Now what is to be done, Captain Roberts?"

"To be done?" said the captain. "Everything is ready. Every man in his place. Every canoe, every bateau has its crew. We were in trouble over the transporting of the Indians. There are four hundred of them all wild to go. Your coming, Captain Fogarty, with the *Caledonia* solves the only difficulty that we had met. In two hours' time we shall be afloat and away."

"Wait one moment!" exclaimed René. They all ran up to the deck. Swiftly René's eye ran over the various groups, but nowhere could he catch sight of Carson. He ran to the fore deck and found that Carson's canoe was missing. Nor could any trace be seen of his Indians. In the confusion of the schooner's landing he had evidently slipped away. Rapidly René explained the situation to Captain Roberts.

"I mistrusted him from the first," he said. "He has gone to warn Mackinaw. He must be stopped."

"And he shall be stopped," exclaimed Captain Roberts. He sprang upon the gunnel of the boat and yelled "Toussaint Pothier! Here! quick!" At his call a French Canadian half breed in voyageur costume, buckskins, red sash and tuque, leapt to the gunnel like a cat. In a few brief, curt phrases Captain Roberts explained the situation to him.

"Toussaint, that man must not be allowed to make Mackinaw. You understand?"

"*Bon!* By gar, we get 'eem *tout suite.*"

Toussaint called out four Indians from the crowd and gave them the necessary orders.

"Captain Roberts," said René, "I should like to take up this trail as well in my canoe."

"All right," replied Roberts.

"Toussaint, your men will take the south course. René here will take the north. Between you, you will surely get him. Take plenty of food and ammunition."

"Me go too?" inquired Toussaint.

"No. Get your voyageurs into the bateaux, food, rifles, ammunition, and, Toussaint, bring Gray Eagle to me."

Toussaint leaped upon the gunnel, uttered a weird cry, and called the name of Gray Eagle. A tall Indian immediately appeared.

"Tell him, Toussaint," said Captain Roberts, "that the hour has come. He already has his orders. But instead of canoes we will first fill up this ship with all the Indians we can carry. The rest will go in canoes. Toussaint, Gray Eagle, you know what you have to do. In two hours' time we must be away."

Not for nothing had Toussaint commanded his brigades of voyageurs for the last five years on their annual fur trips from the Far Northwest. Instantly under his orders men were everywhere in motion. There was no confusion, no hurry and flurry, no heedless rushing about, but swiftly and in almost complete silence, with prompt precision Toussaint's orders, flung forth in ringing, piercing tones, were obeyed.

In less than two hours the flotilla was away, the *Caledonia,* under a gentle breeze, taking the southern and more open channel, the canoes and bateaux threading the islands close in to the southern shore of St. Joseph's. The rendezvous was the more easterly of the two headlands that guarded the entrance to Mackinaw Harbor. Before break of next day the ship came to anchor at the rendezvous to find Toussaint and his bateaux filled with voyageurs waiting there. Soon after, in a long line the canoes glided through the shadows and in dead silence gathered about the schooner and the group of bateaux surrounding her.

At the command of Captain Roberts one of the canoes slipped round the headland, explored the bay, returning within half an hour to report that all was quiet at the fort. Like phantoms in the light of the waning moon the *Caledonia,* the bateaux, and the canoes made their way into the bay and took their places in the deep shadows of the woods that came down to the water's edge.

Swiftly and silently the attacking party made their landing. The Indians took their appointed places in the woods at the rear of the fort. The voyageurs and soldiers were disposed along the shore in front and on both sides of the fort. One of the two guns

was hauled up the face of a lofty cliff some eight hundred feet high where it could easily command the entrance to the fort. Everything in readiness, they silently waited the dawn.

As the first faint streaks of morning began to paint the eastern sky a single canoe appeared round the headland. The cry of a night bird rang out across the quiet waters from the western shore of the bay. In immediate response to the signal the canoe headed for the shadowed line of the wooded shore from which the signal had come. It held René and his Indians with the report that Carson and his Indians were safely guarded upon a neighboring island.

It was still in the early gray of the morning, the dreaded "Indian hour" in savage warfare. A single rifle shot shattered the silence. Immediately on all sides four hundred savage throats shrilled the fierce war cry of the Indians. With that cry mingled the shouts and cheers of the voyageurs and the soldiers.

After some minutes of this horrifying clamor another rifle shot was heard, whereupon once more dead silence reigned for some dreadful minutes. Then from the heights Captain Roberts, accompanied by René and Toussaint Pothier, stepped down to the gate of the fort and demanded entrance. At the gate they were met by Lieutenant Hanks, the Commandant of Fort Mackinaw.

"Hello, Roberts, what's all this devilish row about?"

Gravely and in solemn tones Captain Roberts made reply, demanding in the name of Lieutenant-Governor Isaac Brock, the Brigadier-General of His Majesty's forces in Upper Canada, the surrender forthwith of the Fort of Michilimackinac to His Majesty's forces here assembled.

"I say, Roberts, what the devil do you mean? Is this another of your jokes?"

"Well, Hanks, I have delivered my demand, and now I must inform you that there is a jolly old war on between the United States and Great Britain. I rather think we hold over you. We are here in force. There are some one hundred and eighty voyageurs of the best under Toussaint Pothier here, whom you know, some fifty of the old Tenth Royal Veterans in place immediately

within rifle shot of your gate and rather a strong flight of Indian chappies, some four hundred or so snugly tucked away in the bush behind you. Up on that headline, in quite a useful emplacement, is rather an effective little brass gun; another from the shore commands this gate. Very hard luck, old chap, doncherknow, but fortune of war, eh? So you'd better hand over."

"I'll see you in hell first!" said Hanks promptly.

"Very well, that your last word? Let me show you something."

Roberts stepped some six paces from the gate and waved a white handkerchief to and fro over his head. Immediately from the lofty headland a cannon ball came whining over the fort and dropped in the bushes behind. Immediately on all sides there broke forth again the shrill war whoops of the savages, and from the woods immediately fronting the fort a volley from rifles fired in the air.

"Hanks," said Roberts sternly, "we have men enough to pull your stockade to bits. My fifty veterans and one hundred and eighty voyageurs can capture this fort, but, Hanks, I cannot promise you immunity from the Indians. I cannot pretend that they are under my control."

For thirty long seconds Hanks stood, his eyes fastened on the ground.

"What terms, Captain Roberts?" he asked curtly.

"The very best, Hanks," replied Captain Roberts. "Parole for yourself and your men during the period of this war, and safe conduct to Detroit, the fort stores, rifles, ammunition, everything must be surrendered."

"Captain Roberts," said Hanks with a formal military bow, "I accept your terms. I surrender this fort, but, by the eternal God, if it were only your voyageurs and veterans, I'd fight it out with you. But those red devils——"

"Toussaint, bring up your voyageurs. René, tell the sergeant to bring up his company."

René asked the sergeant to march his men at once to the gate of the fort. With the voyageurs lining the palisades that formed the southern defence of the fort and the veterans on guard at the gate, the surrender was made. The Stars and Stripes floated

down slowly from the tall mast in the center of the square. The Union Jack slowly rose to take its place, and Fort Michilimackinac passed from under the authority of the United States of America into that of Great Britain, and so remained till the end of the war.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE WAR PARLIAMENT

On the 27th of June the House of Assembly met at the call of the Lieutenant-Governor General, Isaac Brock. Its business, war.

The opening was a function of gorgeous splendor. General Brock was attended by a brilliant suite representative of all the forces, military and naval, in the country. His speech at the opening was a truly splendid appeal to the patriotism of the Legislature and of the people of Upper Canada. It closed with a veritable trumpet blast.

"Gentlemen of the House of Assembly, we are engaged in an awful and eventful contest. By unanimity and dispatch in our councils and vigor in our operations, we may teach the enemy that lesson, that a country defended by free men enthusiastically devoted to the cause of their king and constitution can never be conquered."

The people flocked from every part of the surrounding country in large numbers. General Hull's recent bombastic proclamation had stirred the Canadian heart to wrathful mirth. Copies of the proclamation had been posted in conspicuous places throughout the little town of York. Frequently a citizen would be seen, surrounded by a jeering crowd, reading aloud some of the more preposterous paragraphs amid laughter and rousing cheers. The favorite paragraph, however, was the following:

> I tender you the invaluable blessings of Civil, Political, and Religious Liberty. The arrival of an army of Friends must be hailed by you with a cordial welcome. You will be emancipated from Tyranny and Oppression and restored to the dignity of freedom.

But in spite of the Lieutenant-Governor's appeal, the opposition, ably led by Willcocks, Mallory, and Marcle, blocked the

motion to grant supplies for military purposes. Throughout the morning session and for the greater part of the afternoon Willcocks and his followers maintained that war upon Canada was not seriously intended, that it would be madness to take any action that would provoke retaliation, that the home government and the Governor-General were consistently and definitely urging peaceful measures and were hoping for settlement of existing difficulties by negotiation.

Late in the afternoon the Lieutenant-Governor, in disgust and rage, left the house and, followed by his staff, rode to headquarters on the Garrison Common. As he reached the barracks the general's quick eye descried far down the Burlington Road a lone rider pressing hard his jaded horse.

"Who rides there?" he exclaimed. "A runner with dispatches, I vow."

"That is my horse, sir," cried young Vincent Howard. "My horse Lightning, and René riding him. René!" he shouted, and at racing speed the young officer dashed to meet the approaching horseman, greeted him with waving cap, wheeled, and with him approached the waiting company. As he drew near, Howard fell back and allowed René to advance alone.

"Your dispatches, sir," said René, bringing his horse to a stand and saluting.

"Dispatches?"

"Yes, sir. From Captain Roberts at Fort Mackinaw."

"From Roberts at Mackinaw!" exclaimed General Brock in glowing excitement. "One word, sir, quick! The fort?"

"Surrendered, sir," replied René.

"Thank God!" said Brock quietly. "Captain Macdonell look after this boy." And taking the dispatches he entered his private office. About the runner his officers crowded, cheering him, shaking his hands, patting him on the back. Finally they lifted him off his horse and carried him into the messroom.

"The fort captured, eh? Was there a fight? What happened?"

"Let up, men," said Captain Macdonell. "Give the boy a chance. Come on, lad, come sit down. Drink! Food!" he ordered from the mess sergeant. "This boy is played out, and, begad, he has reason to be."

"I'm all right," said René. "Fit as a fiddle. My horse needs care, though."

"He'll get it!" cried Howard. "He'll get it, never fear!"

They put food and drink before René and sat about him, plying him with questions.

"Let the boy be, I say. Good news will keep," exclaimed Macdonell.

Talking, laughing, cheering, questioning, they spent the next half hour together, while René ate and drank. At the end of that time the general appeared. René and all stood at attention.

"Sit down, René," said the general, "sit down and eat your food. Sit down, gentlemen. This is glorious news." He read aloud the dispatch. It was received with wild cheers and cries of, "Well done, Roberts! Bully for Toussaint Pothier! Good Gray Eagle! Well played the old Tenth!"

"The capture was effected twelve days ago?" inquired the general.

"Yes, sir. We took two days loading up the *Caledonia* with stores and getting things to rights. Head winds delayed us on the way down, and the roads from Amherstburg——"

"Tut! tut! my dear fellow. The Lord knows I'm not criticizing the delay.

"Gentlemen, this is another example of effective service on the part of my young runner here. A letter from Captain Roberts which I have just glanced over recounts somewhat in detail the services of this young man. It seems with two of his Indian friends in a birch bark canoe he set out to overtake the *Caledonia,* sailing with a day's head start from Detroit."

"Head winds held her back, sir," suggested René.

"They ran her down, practically captured her from an American trader who had hired her for a trip to Mackinaw, carried her off in triumph to St. Joseph's Isle, and then very materially assisted in the capture of Mackinaw. A very splendid bit of work!"

"It was nothing, sir," murmured René. "Captain Fogarty of the *Caledonia* was very decent about it."

"Fogarty!" exclaimed the general. "I fancy you did some persuading in that direction. Gentlemen, all did their parts, Fogarty,

Roberts, Toussaint, Gray Eagle, but had not my runner here," laying his hand upon René's shoulder, "been something of a man and shown courage and resource, it is doubtful whether Fort Mackinaw would now be flying the Union Jack. I wish to God the gentlemen in the House might know. Why not?" He glanced at his watch. "There is still time. Gentlemen! I'm on the way to the House! Let any who care follow me."

With a mad cheer the whole company ran for their horses.

"Come with me, boy," cried the general. "Captain Macdonell, see that he has a horse and bring him with you to the House."

At a gallop the whole cavalcade dashed back to the House. Ladies and gentlemen who had departed from a wearisome debate or were still standing about the doors of the Parliament Buildings, discussing the proceedings, on witnessing the return of the general once more hurried into the assembly room and filled up the galleries.

To his private room the general summoned the leader of the government with one or two of his following; also Messrs. J. Wilson and D. Rogers, two of the opposition, of whose loyalty there was no question.

"Gentlemen," said the general to this little group, "an important dispatch has just come in, borne by my runner here from Fort Mackinaw. I will ask him to give you as briefly as he can the bare facts."

In simple straight-going words René told his tale, but bald as was the narrative it held the vivid realism of an eyewitness and actor. The promptness, resource, and daring of those responsible for the capture of Fort Mackinaw could not be hid. It was indeed a thrilling tale, and as René described in simple but graphic brevity the scene at the little dock of St. Joseph's Island, one heard the swift orders of Captain Roberts, the ringing commands of Toussaint Pothier, saw the slipping away of the two canoe loads to forestall any intimation of the intended attack reaching Mackinaw at the hands of the American trader. As he described the bewildered surprise of Lieutenant Hanks and his soldiers at Mackinaw, the floating down from the masthead of the Stars and Stripes, and the breaking out of the Union Jack, the eyes of

his listeners began to shine and their faces to glow with enthusiasm.

"Gentlemen," said the general quietly, when the tale had been told, "the importance of this event you do not at first realize. By the capture of Mackinaw we save the Northwest of our country from invasion. But, more, we link to our cause all those Western and Southern tribes already hostile to the enemy. They will flock in hundreds now to the standard of our ally Tecumseh. Gentlemen, this should be at once known to the House. It will greatly encourage all loyal hearts to believe that with united councils, with courage, loyalty, and decision, we can and will defend our country from successful enemy invasion. Mr. Wilson, Mr. Rogers, I believe the motion should come from you. Supplies ought to be at once voted. I know I can appeal to your loyalty and not in vain."

When they entered the House they found Willcocks still contending, even in the face of enemy invasion, that a serious war was not intended. He protested, "In the name of the farmers of this Province and in the name of thousands of peace-loving citizens against the wicked folly of drawing men away from their harvest fields to take part in idle parades and in this absurd fanfaronade of gold lace and scarlet trappings. And for what purpose? To filch from the pockets of the people their hard earned pence and to stir up among them the spirit of bloody war and thereby arouse our neighbors to such a pitch of rage as to make the return of peace impossible, and so to neutralize the efforts now being made by no less a person than the Governor-General of Canada himself and by the home government to bring about a settlement of our differences by peaceful negotiations."

"I do not believe," continued Mr. Willcocks, rising to passionate declamation, "I do not for one moment believe that our neighbors seriously mean war. Otherwise we should not be witnessing the remarkable demonstration which is being carried on in our own country before our eyes. For seventeen days General Hull has been present in overwhelming force in our country, and during that time there has been no effusion of blood. Let us have peace! In God's name let us have peace if by any means we can compass it."

"Peace!" cried the member from Glengarry, Alexander Macdonell, "and the enemy raiding our country some three thousand strong, burning our crops, devastating our fields, terrorizing women and children. The honorable member asks for peace in God's name. I ask him in all reverence what he thinks the Lord God Almighty considers this invasion by a foreign foe?"

"The honorable member for Glengarry exaggerates. True, the enemy has landed some three thousand strong and with only seven hundred to oppose him, yet during these seventeen days there has been no effusion of blood, not a single battle has been fought, not a man has been killed."

Like a lion the stalwart Highlander from Glengarry was upon him. Leaping from his seat Macdonell strode down the aisle and stood where he could command the whole House, his great head crowned with a shaggy mass of black locks, his blue eyes spitting fire, his voice rolling in sonorous thunder.

"Mr. Speaker!" he cried, "the honorable member with his wonted disregard for facts——"

"Order! order!" from Mr. Willcocks.

"With his wonted disregard for facts," continued the member for Glengarry.

"Mr. Speaker, I do protest. The honorable member practically calls me a liar. I demand a retraction."

Mr. Macdonell, who with true Highland courtesy had sat down till Mr. Willcocks had finished his protest, came back swiftly with his answer.

"Mr. Speaker, it is true that a man may disregard facts and not be a liar, but if he disregards facts which he knows, he is a liar, and if he disregards facts that he ought to know, then he is an ignoramus. The honorable gentleman, whether in wilful disregard of facts known, or in wilful disregard of facts which he ought to have known, has misled this House—" cheers from the government members—"I will repeat, the American general, the distinguished and gallant officer who 'makes war by proclamation,' to quote the apt phrase of our honorable and gallant Lieutenant-Governor"—loud cheers from members on both sides of the house—"this distinguished and gallant officer has been parading for seventeen days up and down the Thames Valley de-

stroying crops, terrorizing women and children. That the gallant general has not fought a single battle is quite true. May I inform his champion in this House, the honorable member opposite me, that the gallant and courageous general was given an opportunity of battle by a small company of that distinguished regiment, His Majesty's Forty-first, but discretion and a deep-seated aversion to the effusion of blood, more particularly his own blood, induced him to withdraw his army to safe quarters." Again wild and ironic cheers from the government.

"A little later, with courage reinforced, he ventured an attack upon Fort Malden, defended by a small band of His Majesty's regular troops, one hundred and fifty in numbers together with three hundred of our own brave militia."

"Don't forget the Indians," shouted a voice from the Opposition.

"No, sir, I shall not forget the Indians. Nor will the American people be allowed to forget the Indians whom for fifty years they have systematically by fraud and force dispossessed of their lands held by the ancestors of those untutored peoples from time immemorial, whose villages they have burned, whose brave defenders they have ruthlessly slaughtered and whose vengeance they cannot now hope to escape." Wild cheers and cries. "Go for him, Macdonell! Hit him hard!"

"As I was saying, sir, once more the gallant American general made an attack upon the little fort at Malden. The honorable gentleman says there has been no effusion of blood. Again he is in error as to his facts. On this occasion, an outpost of defence, was a bridge over the little Rivière des Canards, held, not by an army, not even by a battalion of soldiers, but by two sentries only, one Handcock, a British cavalryman, and another Dean, one of our militia. Against the attacking force of the enemy these two stood alone. Sir, in the brave days of old we have read how the Tiber Bridge was held against Lars Porsena's hordes by a dauntless three. The bridge over the Rivière des Canards was held, not by three, but by our dauntless two. History relates that the dauntless defenders of the Tiber Bridge escaped with their lives. Not so our dauntless two. While their ammunition lasted they held the bridge until upon it the gallant Handcock lay dead, leaving

his heroic comrade Dean wounded, bayonet in hand, still disputing the passage of the foe. Dean is now a wounded prisoner in the hands of the enemy. The bridge was saved by the timely approach of our Indian allies under their heroic leader Tecumseh, at whose presence the enemy fled in dismay." Cheers upon cheers, again and again renewed, rocked the House.

"An incident so trivial," continued Macdonell in a voice thrilling with the intensity of his emotion, "an incident so trivial may have escaped the notice of the honorable member, but let me tell my honorable friend that so long as the name of Canada lasts, so long will the names of Handcock and Dean survive in the hearts of all loyal Canadians."

Then followed a scene of wild disorder. Members left their seats and crowded about the big Highlander, cheering wildly. The galleries rocked with cheers of the groups there assembled. The ladies, when their tears would permit, waved their kerchiefs in enthusiastic approval.

When Mr. Speaker had succeeded in restoring order, Mr. J. Wilson of the Opposition rose in his place and claimed the floor. He was a shrewd and canny Scot, radical in his political views, a bitter opponent of the government in its general policy, but soundly loyal and with no love for Mr. Willcocks's pro-American attitude. He was, withal, a man of few words and with a gift for quiet, pungent speech.

"Mr. Speaker," he began, "I am no orator like the honorable members for Glengarry, I am only a plain man of Lowland blood, but as I listened to yon speech that we have heard from the honorable member for Glengarry I came very near to wishing that for once I had his gift of utterance. I will confess that I was moved by that story of those two brave soldiers. I was indeed greatly moved, more moved than I care to say, but had I the tongue and fire of a Macdonell I could also tell a tale of heroism equally thrilling, though happily without such a sad ending. It has been recited in my hearing by another Canadian and I wish this House could have heard it told with the eloquent brevity of a modest young man."

"Name! name!" came from the members of both sides.

"His name, indeed, I do not even know, but I doubt it will be

known some day." Then followed in simple words the story of the capture of Fort Mackinaw.

"Mr. Speaker," continued Mr. Wilson, when he had finished the tale, "when to such names as Handcock and Dean are added those of Captain Roberts, Toussaint Pothier, and Gray Eagle, and all those who played so gallant a part, we ought to take courage to believe that we shall be able to defend our country from invasion. I am for peace. I have aye stood for peace. But I do believe that in the face of threatened invasion a bold front makes for peace, and a display of weakness encourages war. I therefore move that the sum of five thousand pounds be placed at the disposal of the commander-in-chief of the forces in this province for the defence of our country against an invading enemy."

"Make it ten thousand," cried a voice.

"Aye!" echoed other voices. "Make it ten thousand!"

"Weel," replied the canny Scotsman, "I'm thinkin' five thousand will be sufficient at this present time. We can add to it at a later session if necessary."

The motion seconded by Mr. Rogers was carried with acclaim over the futile sputtering protests of Willcocks, Mallory, Marcle, and their immediate following. Thereupon, in great excitement and in a swelling tide of new-born enthusiasm, the House adjourned.

"Where is he?" demanded the general as he was leaving the House. "Where is that confounded runner of mine? He has an infernal habit of disappearing. Macdonell, find him. I want him. Find him at once. Bring him to dinner to-night."

"Yes, sir," replied Macdonell. But the runner was nowhere to be found.

CHAPTER XXXVI

BY BATEAUX AND OVERLAND

The general, accompanied by his suite, rode out upon the parade ground where his York volunteers were drawn up in line.

"Thank God, we are done with parliaments," he said to his aide-de-camp, Colonel Macdonell, "and have now to do with soldiers."

It was a dramatic moment. Owing to lack of transportation facilities, out of his three hundred York volunteers a selection of only one hundred had to be made to accompany him to the Western Peninsula. The general explained the situation to the parade.

"Therefore! Volunteers for active service in the Western Peninsula will take two paces forward. Quick! March!"

Immediately in response the whole line of three hundred men stepped forward. The general gazed at them for a moment or two with flashing eye. In a few brief words he expressed his gratification at the spirit shown by the York volunteers. He assured those who could not be selected that day that opportunity would soon be afforded them to serve their country as they desired. Another method of selection must be adopted.

"Flank companies," he commanded, "two paces to the front. Quick! March!" From the remaining two hundred men there arose a groan that was heard over the parade ground. "Attention!" roared the general. Immediately the line stood rigid and silent. Orders were given that the embarkation would take place the following afternoon, immediately after Divine service, after which the parade was dismissed.

Among those left behind none were more bitterly disappointed than the officers and men of the rifle company. Of the whole battalion none had been keener in their drill and target practice. After dismissal, with angry tears in his eyes, Captain Peter Rob-

inson, standing beside René, was pouring deep and fervent oaths into his friend's ears.

"Captain," said René, "why not offer to take your men overland? It is quite possible. I could show you a trail."

Like a trout at a fly, Captain Robinson leaped at the suggestion. "Come with me," he cried, gripping René by the arm, and rushed him off to the general. With eager voice and eyes ablaze Captain Robinson made known his request, backing it up with René's offer to act as scout.

"René says he knows a road," said the captain.

"René? My runner goes with me," said the general. "You know a route?" he continued, turning to René.

"Yes, sir. I have traveled it often. It is quite possible." The general thought a few moments, then made an instant decision.

"Then, in God's name, take him and your riflemen Captain Robinson, and go. Remember, you two guarantee this. How long will it take you?" he asked of René.

"I can make it in five days easily," replied René.

"You?" exclaimed the general. "But what of Robinson's dandies?"

Captain Robinson stiffened. "My men are ready for service, sir," he said.

The general smiled at him. "Tut! tut! We are none of us ready. But, by the Lord Harry, after a few months' campaigning we will be ready. How long will it take these men to make the trip, René?"

"We ought to be at Amherstburg at the latest, with any luck, in seven days, or at the most, eight."

"It is surely well worth trying, yes, very worth while. We may need you and your hundred rifles, and very badly, in eight days. When can you march, Captain Robinson?"

"To-day, sir," replied Captain Peter, trying to keep his voice level.

"Very well, sir. To-morrow, immediately after our embarkation, you will march. You know your requirements in the way of equipment, rations, and so forth. There must be no failure, Captain Robinson." The general's voice was very stern.

"No, sir," replied Captain Robinson, saluting, and, turning

away with René, stepped off at a rapid pace. They spent the afternoon and night in planning and completing the details for their expedition.

"What about our medical service?" inquired René. "We ought to have a doctor."

"We'll get Sumner," replied Captain Peter. "Doctor Charles Sumner. I know him well. Splendid chap. Keen as mustard."

"I wish we could get old Hector MacCrimmon from Niagara. He's had military experience. He's a great old hero."

"How old?"

"Oh, about my age," smiled René. "Sixty or so. But he'll walk any of your men off their feet. And he plays the pipes, too."

"Plays the pipes! Then, for God's sake, let's have him. Think of it, a piper leading our boys through the woods!"

"I'll get him," said René. "And I'll gather up a few of my scouts. We'll pick up Black Hawk and some of his Mohawks at the Grand River and two or three others that I know."

"What about tents?"

"Tents!" exclaimed René. "What should we need of tents? No, sir, we go light."

Next day the Anglican church was crowded to its capacity for the church parade. René would have escaped the service if he could. He had small respect for the bishop.

"Bally little turncoat!" he grunted to Captain Peter Robinson. That any man, much less a minister of the Gospel should have forsaken the Presbyterian faith and become an Anglican bishop was an act of apostasy that René's Highland blood and breeding made it difficult for him to condone.

"Better show up," urged Captain Robinson. "Good example and that sort of thing, eh?"

But the little bishop's sermon was full of good advice and patriotic fervor. Captain Peter Robinson was much pleased.

"Call that a sermon!" exclaimed René in disgust as they left the church together.

"What's the matter with it? I thought it most eloquent."

"Eloquent?"

"Yes, eloquent."

"What's eloquence to men going off to war, perhaps death?"

"What do you want?"

"Was there a word about sin and repentance and salvation?"

"Good Lord! René! Where did you get all that?"

"If it had been Mr. Dunn, now, of Niagara, he'd have shaken them up a bit and given them something to think of. But what's the use? You're a mere Formalist, a mere Anglican."

"Yes, thank God," replied the captain. "What are you?"

"Well, my uncle is—" René hesitated—"I mean, he was brought up in the Covenanter faith."

"And now?"

"I guess—well—I know he's a Methodist."

"Great heavens! A Methodist! And you, René, surely to goodness you're not——" The captain hesitated. The possibility was too appalling.

"No, I'm not a Methodist. I'm a Presbyterian—at least, if I'm anything."

"Thank God!" fervently breathed Captain Robinson. "What an escape! But there's the bugle for the fall-in. Well, René, we're away."

The ship bearing the general, his staff and tiny army was sailing in a gentle breeze across the bay making for Burlington, where an additional hundred men would be embarked. A group of ladies stood watching and waving farewell.

"How splendid Eustace looked in his uniform!" exclaimed Constance Howard to her friend Charlotte Brookes, "but, all the same, I'd rather go with the riflemen."

"Eustace has to go where he's ordered," said Charlotte.

"Oh, yes, I know, but, all the same, I would rather go with the rifles."

"Of course!" exclaimed Charlotte with a little smile. "The captain needs an adjutant, too."

"Does he indeed? I guess you'd prefer the scouts?"

"Scouts?"

"Yes, don't you know that René has been given the sole charge of the scouts? He picks his own men, too. Don't you wish you were a man, Charlotte?"

"Hush!" exclaimed the girl, with hot cheeks. "Your mother

and mine will hear you, and besides, you have no right to speak so."

Constance turned fiercely upon her friend. "Charlotte, I am disgusted with you. Oh, I know Eustace is all right, and he looks fine in his uniform, and he'll be a lord some day, but you know that your heart is with the scouts, with the boy in buckskins. Poor boy, to send him away with a sore heart! I call it mean."

"I'd thank you to attend to your own business, Constance Howard," replied Charlotte, her voice tense with anger. "You know nothing about it. Why don't you get him for yourself?"

"Oh!" cried Constance fervently, "if I only thought—— But come on, let's go and see them off. I promised Captain Robinson."

The captain, attended by René, was conducting a final inspection of his men. The time to get together the special equipment needed for the overland route had been short enough.

"Anderson! You're short a pair of socks. Get them here in twenty minutes or fall out."

"Malling, no knife, I see. Be here in twenty minutes with a knife or you will be left behind." And so on, from man to man, went the captain down the line. Within half an hour the men were all in place again, each with his kit laid out on the ground before him for final approval.

After the second inspection Vincent Howard came running toward the young ladies.

"I say, our captain is a terror!" he exclaimed, "and René is a little worse, awfully particular, even to a shoe lace."

"Of course. What else?" cried his sister. "I'd hate to be under a sloppy officer. But where's René, Vincent?"

"René? Oh, he's doubtless giving his scouts a final look-over. They must have their own special equipment. They're sure to be all right. But, of course, René must make assurance doubly sure."

"Well, he is responsible, isn't he? He is to be your guide?"

"Yes, he is, and would I were with him in the scouts."

"And I too!" exclaimed Constance, with glowing eyes.

Charlotte said nothing. Her eyes were on the far edge of the field where some officers were riding about.

"There he is!" she exclaimed, "on Gypsy. He is coming here." She could not hide the eagerness in her voice.

"What a rider he is!" exclaimed Constance.

"He rides like an Indian," said Charlotte, "without his hands, don't you see. He guides with his knees, or by the swaying of his body."

René dashed up beside them and flung himself from his mare.

"Well, we're away at last," he said. "Everything is in order."

"I wish you would take me on as a scout," said Vincent.

"Take me," cried Constance.

"Better ask Captain Robinson. He'd love to have you, I'm sure."

Constance made a face at him.

"I know the woods, René, and I can ride. You know I can. I could carry your dispatches," said Charlotte.

"You could that, and I need a courier at this very minute. But what would Eustace say?"

"Eustace! Eustace isn't my boss," replied the girl, throwing up her chin. "What do you want me to do?"

"Oh, nothing," replied René.

Charlotte flushed and drew back. René saw the quick tears in her eyes.

"I mean, Charlotte," he explained, "I do want someone to ride to Niagara to carry a message to Doctor MacCrimmon, Billy Badger, and Chick. But I could not ask you. I shall have to go myself and ride all night."

"Oh, René!" said Charlotte, coming close to him. "Won't you let me go for you? I know every bit of the way, and I can carry your messages to all those people. I can find them. Tell me what you want them to do. Please don't say no." The color was flaming in her cheeks, and her eyes were like stars.

"But your mother might not——"

"You know my mother would not care, René. I'll get a horse here."

"Take Lightning," said Vincent.

"Lightning!" exclaimed René. "Not that devil. Oh, Charlotte, I don't know whether I should ask you to do this."

"Please, René," begged the girl. "You know I can do it. Why not let me? I can easily get a horse."

"All right, Charlotte," said René. "You can take Gypsy, I can

trust you with her. You rode her once before for me, you know."

Charlotte nodded but spoke no word. She could not trust her voice.

"Now, listen, Charlotte, very carefully. You are to see Doctor MacCrimmon. Tell him he is to join our rifle company at London without fail. We have the necessary medical supplies, and he is to bring with him his pipes. You are to see Billy Badger. Tell him that I have the general's orders to pick up scouts wherever I like. I want him to join me at London. See Chick, and if he wants to come, tell him that he is to ride with Billy Badger and the doctor. Tell his mother there will be no danger, that I will take care of him." He made her repeat the messages to him. "Ride to Burlington to-night," he said, "then to Niagara to-morrow. I leave Gypsy in your care."

"Oh, René!" cried Charlotte. "You're an angel, a perfect dear. I wish I could thank you, but that I cannot do. You keep doing so many things for me, and I never can do anything for you."

"That's all right, Charlotte," said René in a loud, almost brusque voice. "Now I must get away. You'll have to hurry, Vincent," he said. "The line is forming up. I must say good-bye to your mother and to yours, Charlotte. I see them over there."

"Good-bye, dear René," said Constance softly, tears running down her cheeks. "God keep you. And—René dear—I'm going to kiss you. Oh! oh! I'm going to cry. I can't help it and I don't want to."

"You stop that, Constance," said Charlotte, white and angry. "You'll make us all boo-hoo in another minute, and we must not —we will not cry when our—our men go away." Her face was set like carved ivory.

"Good-bye, Vincent," she said, giving him her hand. The boy looked at her longingly, but cried gayly. "Good-bye, Charlotte. You will welcome us when we return, covered with glory."

"Good-bye, René," said Charlotte, approaching him shyly. "We are old and dear friends."

"Yes, Charlotte," said René very quietly. "Old and dear friends."

She gave him both her hands. "Oh, René, René!" she whis-

pered, looking up at him with shining eyes. "Good-bye, good-bye." Her face was pale and pitiful.

With a swift, fierce movement René caught her to him. "I loved you first," he said defiantly, "and you loved me once." For a moment she lay in his arms with closed eyes, quivering.

At this juncture Captain Robinson rode up to make his farewells. With a curse René released the girl, turned, and went away.

"Ah, Vincent," said Captain Robinson, "I see your mother over yonder. Perhaps you will be good enough to tell her that I am coming to say good-bye."

"Yes, sir," replied Vincent, running off toward his mother.

"Good-bye, Captain Robinson, and good luck," said Charlotte. "I'm away too." She caught Gypsy's bridle and with a little smile on her face led her off, leaving Constance and Captain Robinson together.

Eight days later René walked into Colonel St. George's orderly room at Amherstburg.

"Hello, and where did you come from?" cried Colonel St. George.

"From York with Captain Peter Robinson and his rifle company of one hundred men, sir."

"And how did you get here?"

"Through the bush."

"Through the bush?" said the astonished colonel. "Is this young man a liar?" he inquired of Colonel Elliott, who was present with him. "What do you mean—through the bush?"

"We marched, sir, from York by London and straight down the Thames Valley."

"And where are your men now?"

"They are a couple of days behind. We met with bad luck. There has been a lot of rain; consequently the rivers are high and the swamps full."

"And how many men fell out?"

"Not a man, sir. Captain Robinson had them in fine condition."

"And you scouted them, I bet?"

"Black Hawk and his Mohawks showed them the trails. I ar-

ranged the camps en route. They didn't do badly. And I want to know where you'd like them to camp."

"Well, I'll be dashed!" exclaimed Colonel St. George. "Things are beginning to move. You bring one hundred men through the bush, and the general is coming with three hundred men along the lake shore, so a runner informs me. The Lord only knows how he can get along the lake shore through these storms."

"He'll get through, sir," said René in confident voice. "No storm blows that can stop him."

"What do you say? Have you seen the storms along the shore of Lake Erie?"

"Yes, sir, and it makes no difference. No storm can keep the general back."

"He sent word that he expected to be here to-day."

"Then, sir, you may look for him."

"By Gad!" exclaimed the colonel.

"You see, sir," exclaimed René, "I know him."

That night one of Lieutenant Roulette's sentries challenged General Brock as he stepped from his bateau upon the Lake Erie shore below Fort Malden.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE CAPTURE OF DETROIT

THE hot August sun was flooding fields and orchards about the Brookes Manor House. Under the apple trees the family were gathered with Eustace and Hope. They were discussing the Detroit capture. The colonel was raging violently over the Armistice, cursing the folly of Governor Prevost.

"Armistice!" he exclaimed. "And Brock's plans all laid for the capture of Sacketts Harbor with the destruction of shipping and arsenal. The man is mad. We would have gained command by now of Lake Ontario. But—well—General Brock has my sympathy. And not a word as to military activities. The enemy will move to this front enormous supplies of men and stores."

"You should have seen the general, sir, when the captain of the *Lady Prevost* came aboard the *Chippewa* with the news. Just one word he said—but it was enough—and turned on his heel. We did not see him for the rest of the day."

"Eustace, do tell us about Detroit," said Charlotte. "We have only had rumors. Begin right at the first."

"The most extraordinary tale in all military history," exclaimed Eustace. "It calls for better elocutionary powers than I possess. Well, here goes. York, eh, August 6th?—the general and a hundred Yorks aboard—Burlington—we take on another hundred of our gallant militia."

"Don't you sneer at our militia!" said Charlotte wrathfully.

"Heaven forbid—especially as the general does anything but sneer. To proceed—Niagara—overland to Port Dover—another hundred militia—three hundred men in all, of which two hundred and sixty are militia—forty regulars—eh what? Launch the jolly bateaux—pack in the noble three hundred—the general in leading bateau. Rain—wind—storm—thunder, good Lord! such

as I never heard—my teeth rattling in my jaws—driven ashore to shelter again and again—then off again—day and night when the going was possible. Once run on a jolly old reef—stick fast—waves washing up over our bateau—oars out—shoving and heaving—no use—bally old bateau hard aground. 'Overboard!' shouts the general and plumps in himself—off the sand bar and away again!"

"Splendid! What did the men think of that?" inquired Mrs. Brookes.

"My dear Mrs. Brookes, I haven't the slightest idea. Personally I was quite paralyzed with terror of the beastly lake and with cold. The militia johnnies followed the general overboard with ringing cheers and that sort of thing, you know. Well, to proceed—end of fifth day in black night and in dead calm, land on a sandy shore—thick woods right down to water's edge—the general as always leading. 'Halt!' Dramatic moment. Sentry, one of Roulette's useful sailormen—marine chap Roulette—all alert and alive—1 A. M. of August 14th. Eight days from little York, eh? What d'ye think o' that?"

"Fine work! Very fine work. Nearly four hundred miles in all, in eight days. Excellent!" said the colonel.

"General snaps out orders for council of all officers in the district within an hour. Spends the hour on General Hull's correspondence, captured by that marine chappie Roulette a month ago, and also on correspondence captured at Brownstown eight or ten days before."

"Brownstown? Where is that? What happened?" inquired the colonel. "Never heard of it."

"Very neat thing, sir. Pulled off by that Indian chap, Tecumseh. There's a man, sir." The Honorable Eustace, indulging in a bit of excitement, lost his drawl. "Extraordinary fellow. Ambushed expedition sent out by General Hull to open communications south—two hundred Ohio bushrangers, Indian fighters. Tecumseh killed twenty, wounded another twenty. Captured baggage, correspondence, etc.—jolly good haul—soldiers' and civilian letters from Detroit, gave away the whole show inside the fort. All in a funk, sir. Afraid of Indian warriors, and don't blame 'em much, either."

"Cowards!" ejaculated the colonel.

"Well, I wouldn't say that, sir. One thousand noncombatants, old men and women and children—falling into Indians' hands—rather got onto General Hull's nerves—what I say is—of course——"

"He had his fort, guns, ammunition, and troops," snorted the colonel.

"Yes, yes, of course. Rather feeble chap, Hull—and not popular at present time with the American forces, I should say."

"Go on, Eustace," said Charlotte.

"Where was I? Oh, yes, the general, from correspondence, finds out things are in a bad way in fort—well—council of war—what to do? At that moment, dramatic incident! In come some Indian chappies, chiefs, eh what?—walk right into center of the company—not a by-your-leave—headed by that amazing Tecumseh. I assure you, sir, he stood there the equal of Brock himself, magnificent! Really, you know—to see those two—our general and that chief—stand eying each other—dramatic? Well, rather. Speeches—short and to the point. What to do? Wait or attack? Attack? Preposterous—a fort—thirty-six guns—two thousand five hundred men—twenty-foot palisades—twelve-foot ditch—six feet deep. Madness! All the officers opposed except chap Elliott of the Indian Department."

"I know him, a sound fellow!" said the colonel.

"Yes, sir, all opposed except Elliott and Tecumseh. The chief draws a map of country on birch bark with his scalp knife, showing woods, streams, trails—marvelous thing. General settles question in two words. 'Gentlemen, I have decided to attack. I invite no longer your advice but your support.' Next day powwow with Indians—march to Sandwich. Flag of truce to Detroit over the river by Colonel Macdonell and Major Glegg, demanding surrender. Nerve! Eh what? Declined! Hull proposes to fight! Sandwich battery of five guns opens fire instanter.

"At nightfall Tecumseh and six hundred of his chosen slip over river. I assure you, sir, you hear about silent savages, shadowy forms, and that sort of thing. I stood with Elliott fifty yards away—six hundred Indians invisible in bush—canoes of all sorts slip into the water—not a sound—glide away along shore

in black shadow. I assure you I never saw or heard Indians or canoe—talk about ghosts! Next morning at sunrise the general and seven hundred, all told—in boats, scows, and bateaux—a weird flotilla with five little popguns for artillery, crossed the river, the general standing up in leading bateau in full view of the enemy! Eh what? Our Indian friend Tecumseh steps out of the bush to meet him. Plans all laid—Indians all in place in the bush around the port. General proposed we wait for attack from fort to develop. At that moment on the run comes friend René—dramatic episode!—René and an Indian—gasping the news that Colonel McArthur's Kentucky cavalry, four hundred of them dispatched by Hull southward, are returning three miles distant. By Jove!—between two fires!—what? Three minutes to decide. General orders 'Attack at once.' Tecumseh orders his second in command, Roundhead the Wyandot, to bring up Indians and open the ball. Off we go—up the River Road, little Bullock leading bravely the advance guard. Indians yelling like fiends in woods—our little force three hundred regulars and four hundred militia in cast-off red coats of Forty-first—clever ruse of Major Evans—moving up River Road steadily, bang onto the fort, three quarters of a mile away. We can see two big and useful guns of enemy covering our advance—men with blazing fuses beside them—woof!—My hair on end—they can blow us to bits! When, ho! presto! the fort gate opens—a chappie waves a white flag—by Jove, I could have fallen on his neck. Surrender! Thank God!"

"What forces and stores?" inquired the colonel.

"The report is twenty-five hundred men, sir, but four or five hundred men were off with Colonel McArthur, and there were a good many unfit really for service—thirty-seven guns—one hundred thousand cartridges—forty thousand pounds' worth in all, they say—twenty-five hundred stand of arms—and the whole territory of Michigan. Big parade next day—parade of enemy prisoners—not a pleasant sight, sir—men weeping and gnashing their teeth, furious, damning their general—officers breaking and throwing away their swords. Had a chat with some of them—first-rate chaps. Really, I don't want to see that sort of thing again—too bally sickening."

"And Hull—how did he take it?"

"Seemed jolly cheerful—apparently hates effusion of blood, eh what? Lucky if they don't hang him. Quebec is the only safe place for him just now."

"And what happened to all those poor soldiers?" asked Mrs. Brookes.

"Michigan military sent home quite happy. Volunteers sent off on parole and jolly glad to get it. Regulars with their general off to Quebec. Oh! By the way you remember that chap Dean spoken of in Legislature by Macdonell, member for Glengarry? Rather pretty bit of ceremonial. Called up before whole lot of us—decorated—patted on back—very jolly show. Quite a speech, eh what? Apologize, Mrs. Brookes, but really, doncherknow. Quite unusual. All ranks fearfully bucked up—ready for anything."

"And then comes this infernal armistice! Good heavens above! Oh, what an ass that Governor Prevost is!" raged the colonel.

But to the others the marvelous military achievement seemed to dwarf all other happenings, even the Armistice, for the time being. Later they came to estimate rightly the serious results of the blocking of General Brock's plans for the capture of the strategic positions on the southern shores of the Lakes, and the extraordinary one-sided nature of the arrangement made.

"And where has René gone, Eustace?" asked Hope. "Chick came back from his scouting trip a new boy—a man indeed. Looks so strong and brown—and talks of nothing but of René. You would think René was in command of the overland expedition, and not Captain Robinson."

"Well, I guess he determined its route, its camp grounds, got its food, and all that sort of thing," said Hope. "So Edward told me."

"But where is he?" said Charlotte. "Has no one seen him since the return of the Yorks?"

"I saw him go on board the *Chippewa* with the general," said Eustace. "He was looking after a wounded American officer. Too bad, sir—one of our cannon balls killed that plucky chap from Mackinaw, Lieutenant Hanks. Same ball wounded pretty badly another officer from Kentucky that René knew. René brought him down to Niagara to be under Doctor Hector MacCrimmon."

"Kentucky officer?" asked Charlotte. "What is his name? Where is he staying? There is very little comfort in the Niagara hospital. You ought to see who it is, Papa. Very likely one of those American friends of René who were so good to him and Hubert."

"Oh, he'll be cared for. We don't neglect our prisoners, Charlotte," said her father rather impatiently.

"I know just how comfortless that hospital is, Papa—clean and all that, of course—but I shall surely look him up."

And Charlotte was as good as her word. The very next day, visiting the hospital at Niagara with Eustace, she inquired after an American officer, but though a number of sick American privates were under care of the nurses there was no officer.

"We must inquire of Hector MacCrimmon. He will know. René is as mean as he can be. He never comes to see us."

"Jolly busy, I guess, up and down the river on both sides," said Eustace.

"Both sides? What do you mean? Is he a spy?"

"Pickin' up information for the general. He is what you call pretty slick. When he puts his Indian togs on you couldn't tell him from a Seneca."

"I hate that. He'll be shot some day. Oh, I wish he wouldn't."

"No fear of him. By the way, we can perhaps find out from old Hector where he is."

Hector, whom they found in his garden, however, knew nothing of René's movements.

"He will be on the road somewhere between Kingston and Fort Wayne, I am thinking. He is never at rest, and the general keeps him busy. But what he is doing nobody knows."

"And his American officer, Doctor MacCrimmon?"

Hector MacCrimmon put his finger to his lips. "He is in with Elspeth yonder. And a very fine gentleman he is. A friend of René's, indeed, one of his former partners, in a way."

"Oh, I know!" cried Charlotte. "It is Colonel Danby?" Doctor MacCrimmon nodded. "Is he getting better? Can I see him?"

"Yes, getting better, but it will be very long and tedious, a question of nursing, really. René has written to his daughter. But what to do with her if she comes? Of course, he is on parole for the war. Come away in. He will be the better of your visit."

A sudden shyness seized Charlotte. This was Nora's father. How much did he know? They found Colonel Danby swathed in bandages and suffering a good deal of pain.

"Here is a young lady wants to see one of the enemy at close range, Colonel Danby," said Doctor MacCrimmon, ushering Charlotte into the colonel's room.

"Not an enemy, Doctor MacCrimmon, any longer. Indeed, never an enemy," replied the colonel.

"This is Miss Charlotte Brookes, Colonel," said Miss Elspeth, "and her—her friend the Honorable Captain Eustace Burton."

"And you are Charlotte," said the colonel, taking her hand in both of his.

Charlotte's face flamed red.

"Yes, I am Charlotte. René has told me about you and Nora. You were very kind to him."

"He was good to us. We can never repay him. He saved Nora's life, you know."

"But I never heard that," said Doctor MacCrimmon.

"Nor I," said Eustace.

"No. He would not be telling any of us." Miss Elspeth's voice was full of quiet pride.

"He told me," said Charlotte, "but not much of the details."

"Not he," said Miss Elspeth.

"It was a nervy thing to do," said the colonel, and he proceeded to give a graphic account of the affair.

"A very gallant deed," concluded the colonel. "That whole town was ringing with it."

"He might have been killed, the lad," said Miss Elspeth, wiping her eyes.

"Jolly plucky, I say. Eh, what?" said Eustace.

"So, my dear young lady, you may imagine, perhaps, how we regard your friend René."

But Charlotte was sitting silent, with hands fiercely gripped, her eyes glowing dark in her white face.

"Colonel Danby," she said abruptly, "you must come to us. Miss Elspeth will not mind. Indeed, she will have no room for Nora when she comes. We have rooms and rooms. Miss Elspeth, tell him he must come. Mamma will be very glad to have you. You

belong to us in a way. You were so good to Hubert, too. You are like one of the family."

"Dear young lady, you are too kind. You are all too kind to an enemy."

"Hoots, what are ye sayin'?" exclaimed Miss Elspeth indignantly. "Are ye not René's friend? And besides, it is no enemy ye are, whatever."

"No, I hated the war and opposed it. But when my battalion was called I had to go."

"Of course, and what other could ye do?" answered Miss Elspeth. "And though we will be sore to lose you, we will give you up to Miss Charlotte—but to no other, mind you, and you will be better cared for."

"No, no, Miss Elspeth. Not that. But we have such loads of room. Oh, I'm glad! It's all settled, isn't it, Doctor? And we will have Nora, too. Oh, splendid!"

And so it came that in spite of Colonel Brookes's opposition at first to the idea of offering hospitality to a Yankee foe, Colonel Danby was duly installed in a large, airy room in the Brookes Manor House, a willing, and as time went on, a highly regarded, prisoner of war on parole.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE SPY

The Armistice was over. General Brock, in informal council with his officers, sat reading from a paper on the table before him:

"Eight thousand troops between Fort Niagara and Black Rock."

"Yes, sir," replied his runner, "to be exact, eight thousand five hundred and seventy-six is the roll."

The general continued reading:

"Discipline poor, men ignorant of simplest military duties, officers likewise, with the exception of General Wadsworth, Colonel Winfield Scott, and Captain Wool. Subordinate officers quite useless. Military stores and equipment inadequate. Government apparently quite neglectful. But since exploit of Captain Elliott men all eager, clamoring to attack battery of twenty-four guns at Fort Gray, two field guns on slope of hill. Situation at Black Rock not fully investigated, but reports indicate great lack of discipline. General Smyth refuses to cooperate with his superior officer, General Van Rensselaer.

"Ah, what about this man Smyth?"

"Something like Hull, sir, only a little worse. Throw a thousand men across the river at Black Rock, and we could drive them into the woods like rabbits."

"Ah, if we only could. Gentlemen, I feel I must give you some information," said the general, taking some correspondence from his file.

"The Governor-General writes that a dispatch from Lord Bathurst advises the evacuation of Detroit, the surrender of the state of Michigan."

Deep curses from the officers.

"Fortunately, Sir George allows me certain discretion."

"Thank God for that, sir," said Colonel Macdonell.

"There is this further, however." He read from another letter:

"It must be explicitly understood that you are not to resort to offensive warfare for purposes of conquest; your operations are to be confined to measures of defence and security.

"You see our predicament, gentlemen. As our runner here says, a bold attack upon Black Rock would almost certainly yield valuable results, but meantime we have lost the initiative and must await attack."

Once more the general read from the report before him:

"The attack will probably be launched from Lewiston."

"Your reasons?"

"An attack from Fort Niagara would be smothered from Fort George."

"My idea exactly. Gentlemen, we have a strategist here," said the general with a smile.

René blushed.

"I mean, sir——"

"Tut, tut, I understand. Quite right. What's this?

"Young Brookes is a prisoner at Lewiston.

"You mean the son of Colonel Brookes? How is this? Colonel Macdonell did we not make representations about this ten days ago?"

"Yes, sir, but without result."

"How came Brookes there?" inquired the general.

"Hubert Brookes has been in Boston for some two years or so. He came as escort to Miss Danby from Kentucky, who came to visit her father, Colonel Danby, a wounded prisoner captured at Detroit. He had a letter from Governor Gerry of Massachusetts asking for his safe conduct and also from Secretary Eustis authorizing his transfer to Canada but——" René hesitated.

"Well, sir, what is it?"

"—I am not certain, sir, but an officer of General Harrison's in the West, Captain Gresham, a friend of Miss Danby's, who

came to Lewiston to meet her, opposed the idea, quoting the case of John Henry. The Americans are making a great deal out of the Henry letters, sir."

"Preposterous nonsense! Well?"

"He suggested that Hubert be put on parole. This Hubert refused. He was then confined in the military prison at Lewiston, where he is now."

"Preposterous! After our generous treatment of their prisoners. Colonel, you will please follow this up at once. Intolerable! a civilian, the son of one of our most distinguished citizens! And Miss Danby, where is she?"

"At Brookes Manor, sir," said Eustace, "helping to nurse her father."

"Note that, Colonel Macdonell, please."

The general continued reading:

"Boats are prepared at Lewiston.

"Ah, we have seen them. How many?"

"They have ordered some thirty, each carrying twenty men. I did not see more than a dozen or so."

"Very good, very good, excellent report! Lucid, concise. Gentlemen, this is a model report from my runner. We shall need you again, René. You can take a few days off. It is a dangerous job. If you are caught we cannot help you. You understand that?"

René shrugged his shoulders. "Yes, sir."

"You will need to be careful. Extremely careful."

"Well, sir, you don't take much care of yourself," said René boldly.

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean, sir, at Detroit you didn't take much cover. You crossed the river standing upright in the leading boat in full view of the enemy, sir."

"Cover, sir? A British officer does not take cover," exclaimed the general.

"In this war I would like to say—if I may——"

"Go on, boy, we are talking as comrades here," said the general.

"Then, sir," said René, hurrying his words, "in this kind of warfare everyone takes cover, and your officers and men would

all feel much happier if you would take some little care of yourself. About us it doesn't matter, but about you, sir——"

René's voice abruptly broke down. The officers murmured their approval. The general was obviously moved.

"Tut, tut, boy, you mean well, but an officer cannot send his men where he is not prepared to lead them." An ominous word which his officers remembered only too bitterly a few days later.

After the rising of the council Eustace took René by the arm and led him from the room.

"Now, then, young fellow, I am ordered to produce you to your friends at Brookes Manor, living or dead, preferably the former. And, by Jove, I mean to obey orders."

René hesitated. "I must go to the Grand River," he began, "and——"

"You are coming with me, young fella. The Brookeses, one and all, and the Danbys especially, are quite hurt at your neglect of them—very especially Miss Nora, that young lady—by Jove, you are to be congratulated."

"Congratulated? What do you mean?"

"My dear boy, she is quite mad about you, openly, frankly, and utterly off her head about you. Can't understand it myself, but there you are. By the way, she is a young lady of extraordinary charm, quite fascinating and clever, what? Nurse, cook, companion, and a jolly good dancer! My word! Lucky dog you are!"

"Oh, stow that stuff," said René. "I had the luck to save her from a smash-up. She is grateful and all that, but anything else is nonsense."

But Eustace could not be turned from dilating upon Nora's many and varied virtues and charms, but continued to expatiate upon the theme till they drew up at the Brookes Manor House. René had not seen Nora since her arrival at the Manor House. He looked forward to his meeting with her with the liveliest delight. Of all his friends she was dearest to him. Her presence would also make his visit less painful. He had never been able to school himself to endure Eustace's calm assumption of proprietary rights over Charlotte and the girl's obvious acceptance of the relationship. The colonel's attitude toward Eustace was maddening. He

was already regarding him as a son. Nora's presence offered hope of relief.

Her welcome of René was as cold water to a thirsty soul.

"René! René! René!" she cried, rushing at him. "You bad, wicked boy! How could you neglect me so!" Without the slightest hesitation or sign of embarrassment she flung her arms about him and kissed him once, twice, thrice. "There! two for myself and one for Daddy. For you know, René, you really saved his life too. He would have died in that horrid hospital at Detroit if you had not brought him to those darling creatures, the MacCrimmons. And these dear things here took him in. Oh, you dear, dear Canadians! Why are we fighting you? Oh, it is so cruel and so wicked!" Her tears were flowing and her voice breaking in sobs. "Oh, I can't help it! I'm not a bit ashamed! I want to cry! I love you all so!"

"Why, Nora, you make us all weep," said Mrs. Brookes. "But we are all glad to see you, dear René."

"Why weep? René is here, and we are all so proud of him," said Charlotte, giving René her hands. "We have had such wonderful tales of you from Captain Peter. How you not only found the trails and the camping grounds, but how you bucked them up and kept them going at top speed. Oh, he was quite eloquent, I assure you." Her composed manner and calm voice roused Nora to fury.

"Charlotte! You—you cold-blooded fish! How can you! And you haven't seen this boy for days and weeks!"

"Fifty-eight days," answered Charlotte calmly.

"Not till this afternoon at four o'clock," corrected René in a voice equally calm.

"Oh, I can't understand you two! You are so disgustingly accurate and so proper! Thank heaven I am a Southerner. I have a heart, even if I have to break it. Oh, Daddy, am I an utter fool?" she cried running to her father and hiding her face in his breast.

"No, my darling girl," said Colonel Danby, wiping his tears. "You are speaking for both of us. These good friends will understand and will forgive us if we cannot quite keep our hands on our hearts."

"Dear Colonel Danby," said Mrs. Brookes, "we do understand perfectly dear Nora's feelings. You both owe much to our dear René. We all do. And now we want to hear all his news. He must have a great many exciting things to tell us."

"He has, by Jove!" exclaimed Eustace, "but can you get them out of him? Try it, eh what? An oyster is a chime of bells beside him. His reports to the chief—I've read them—are as lucid as a proposition of Euclid and equally thrilling. Disgusting! He simply won't 'emote,' as you say, Nora."

"I have news about Hubert, Mrs. Brookes," said René seeking to divert attention to a subject which he knew would be immensely absorbing.

"Hubert!" the whole party shouted.

"Yes! He is quite fit—but unfortunately in the meantime is detained at Lewiston."

"Please don't stop!" said Mrs. Brookes. "Go on, René."

"Well, as you know, he came up with Nora. They wanted to parole him. He wouldn't have that. General Van Rensselaer would have sent him over, but Captain Gresham interfered."

"Gresham!" exclaimed Colonel Danby. "What had he to do with it?"

"Oh, he told me he would help Hubert through," cried Nora, indignant.

"Well, he didn't help much. As a matter of fact, he blocked everything by citing the John Henry incident"; and René proceeded to set forth Gresham's part in the proceedings.

"He shall answer to me for this," said Colonel Danby. "I shall write Eustis immediately about this, and Gerry too."

"I shall see General Brock at once," said Colonel Brookes. "The idea! The Henry letters! Absurd folly!"

"The general is sending a special envoy to-day, sir," said Eustace.

"But where is the dear boy?" asked Mrs. Brookes.

"In the military prison at Lewiston, if you can call it a prison."

"Prison! My God!" groaned Colonel Brookes.

"Oh, poor boy!" cried his wife, her tears flowing.

"We will get him out, sir," said René quietly.

"Who will?"

"If the envoy fails, I will, sir!" The quiet assurance in his voice made a silence in the room.

"By Gad, he will do it, sir!" exclaimed Eustace with cheery emphasis.

"No!" cried Charlotte suddenly. "You are not to go over there again, René. General Brock and Colonel Danby's friends will get him out." The girl's voice was shrill with fear. All eyes were turned upon her.

"No! You are not to go over there, René! We can wait a few days longer." She hurried on. "If they catch you—you know what they will do—you must not! You shall not!"

She was quite distraught. Her face white, her lips trembling, her eyes wide with horror. Nora was keenly searching her face. What did this intensity of emotion mean?

"Hush, Charlotte dear! René will not——"

"Mamma, I will not hush!"

"Be quiet, girl," said her father sternly.

"I shall not be quiet, Papa. I cannot be quiet. Why should it be René that must go on all these desperate missions? Why——"

"My dear Charlotte," said her father, "René must obey orders. The general trusts him and——"

"Are there no others in the army?" demanded the girl. "No other runners? It is not fair!"

"But, Charlotte old girl——" began Eustace.

"Oh! Don't speak to me! You don't go. None of you go." She had abandoned all self-control. Eustace shrank back from her as if she had struck him in the face.

"Charlotte, you don't quite understand." René's voice was cheerfully nonchalant. "There is no one knows the ropes as I do. They can't catch me." The calm confidence in his voice again quieted them. "The general is not sending me. I am really on a bit of a furlough. I am on my own. You need not worry about me. Of course, you understand, sir," he continued, addressing Colonel Brookes, "there is no real cause for anxiety about Hubert. He is suffering inconvenience, that's all—no danger, I mean." At his words Charlotte shrank back into silence, but her white face and trembling lips did not escape Nora's shrewd eyes. She slipped over to Charlotte's side and took her hand. But Charlotte

drew her hand away from her touch, turned from her and hurriedly left the room.

"Poor girl, she is terribly overwrought," said her mother.

"Overwrought?" said Colonel Brookes sharply. "She is rude, plainly rude."

"Rude, sir?" said Eustace.

"Yes, rude—to you."

"To me? She spoke the plain truth. She——"

"Eustace! Please!" interposed Mrs. Brookes. "Charlotte is overwrought. Her hospital work is very exhausting. Day and night she is on the move. I am anxious about her."

"She is not sleeping well," said Nora. "I hear her at night."

"Sleep? Who of us can sleep with eight thousand of the enemy planning invasion?" said Colonel Brookes in a bitter voice. "But we forget our patient. Pardon me, sir, and you, Miss Nora. We should not discuss these things before you."

"My dear Colonel, you don't imagine I don't understand how you feel." Colonel Danby's voice was weak and shaking.

"Now, now, Colonel, you are not to say any more about it. We forgot ourselves for a moment. You must not allow yourself to be disturbed."

Nora came running to Colonel Brookes and, catching his hand, pressed it to her breast.

"You dear, dear man!" she cried in a choking voice. "How can you bear to have us in your sight?"

"Tut, tut! my dear girl, we couldn't do without you. Here, René, take this young lady into the orchard and let her show you our greenings. You will remain for supper. Take René away, Nora. Off you go."

From the window of her bedroom Charlotte followed the two with angry eyes as they passed into the orchard, Nora hanging upon René's arm, her glowing face upturned to his, René smiling down upon her with every sign of affection.

Upon her dressing table stood a miniature of Hubert, resplendent in his Guards' uniform, a handsome and gallant figure of a man. She lifted it, gazed upon it long and critically, now and then glancing out of her window upon the two beneath the apple tree, talking so eagerly. The girl, at least, was talking

eagerly; the boy—and how boyish his dark, handsome face seemed—listening with every appearance of delight.

"She loves him," said the girl; "he saved her life. She would die for him. And he—I believe—oh, I hate her." Once more she gazed upon the picture in her hand. Then with a sigh she placed it carefully upon her dresser. Then, donning her riding habit, she made her way by a back door to the stable, mounted her horse, and rode away. Nor did she appear at the supper table that evening.

CHAPTER XXXIX

SAVIOR OR SPY

LATE the same evening René rode for the Grand River and spent the night making plans with Black Hawk for a visit to the Lewiston encampment. A week later two Seneca Indians could be seen at evening fishing from a canoe in the shadow of the American shore, and apparently with good luck. One had lost a hand, but a hook, sharpened to a point and screwed into a socket strapped fast to the arm, seemed to fill fairly effectively the place of the lost member and indeed appeared as if in time of need it might prove an ugly weapon of attack. With a sackload of fish the Indians climbed the steep bank and made their way toward a camp fire beside the military prison, a loosely constructed building, where a group of soldiers were sitting, preparing their evening meal.

With a shout the soldiers welcomed them. "Fish! Jumpin' Jeremiah!" yelled a tall, lank New York volunteer. "Hain't seen any since I left Albany! How many?"

The Indian emptied the sack upon the grass.

"White fish! Six, eight, ten, twelve! and whoppers!"

"Hish! Shut y'r trap, Jabe! D'ye want the hull gang down on us?"

"Y're dead right, Sergeant. Buy the lot, eh?"

"How much for the lot?"

"Two blanket!" said the one-handed Indian.

"Don't I wish I had 'em. No blanket."

"One blanket!" said the Indian.

"No blanket."

"One gun, powder, shot."

"No gun, no powder, no shot."

"Tabac, fire water," grunted the other Indian.

Between them all they managed to produce a bottle of rum and some tobacco. The Indians were overjoyed.

"Ho! Ho! Good!" said the second Indian, his black eyes gleaming in the firelight. He snatched up the bottle, the other took the tobacco and, sitting down at a little distance, they began drinking while the soldiers joyfully prepared the fish for the pot. Before supper was ready the Indians began quarreling.

"Shut up that row there or I'll put you in the coop," ordered the sergeant. But the quarreling continued and soon developed into a fight.

With an oath the sergeant sprang up.

"Come on, boys, let's shut up these devils. They'll have the camp down on us." The one-armed Indian offered no resistance, but the other, mad with drink, drew his tomahawk and, flashing it about his head, launched it at the sergeant, missing his ear by inches. Leaping at him, the sergeant, aided by his comrades, bore the Indian to earth, dragged him to the prison, and flung him in bodily. The one-armed man had disappeared.

"Mighty near thing, Sergeant, eh?"

"Took a lock of my hair. Savage devil, ain't he? Hope he won't kill that young Canadian chap in there."

"A Canadian more or less don't matter, I guess."

"This feller does. He's rather a big bug at home. The major says they're making quite a fuss about him. But the redskin appears to be quiet enough. That last tap I gave him will keep him thinkin' a while, I guess," said the sergeant. "Come on, let's feed. That fish smells pretty good to me, a lot better than that bloody, stringy beef they give us, anyway. Lucky thing them Indians fetched up our way."

The following morning, however, the sergeant had reason to change his mind as to his luck when he stood before his officer to report the escape of the young Canadian upon whose safekeeping so great a store was set.

"What! That young Brookes escaped!" exclaimed the officer in command. "This will be a serious thing for you, Sergeant. The general was extremely particular about that prisoner. And Major Gresham will make a devil of a row over it. He has made himself responsible for him. Better report to him at once and get it over."

Gresham, in a few moments, came rushing to the orderly room in a state of furious excitement.

"What's this I hear, Major Brace? Do you mean to say that young Brookes has escaped?"

"Unfortunately, yes, Major Gresham."

"How in the name of all the fiends in hell did that happen? Who is responsible?"

"Sergeant, tell your story," ordered Major Brace.

In the course of the story it emerged that the escape had been effected by the two Seneca Indians, one of whom had lost a hand.

"Lost a hand? Have you got him? Or is he gone too?" shouted Gresham.

"He's gone," replied the sergeant, "but we caught his companion. He could have got off, but he came back to assist young Brookes, who had stumbled over some guy ropes. Fought like a tiger, but we got him."

"Let's have this Indian in," demanded Gresham.

"What's the use?" asked Major Brace. "He's just an ordinary Indian. They were all together and——"

"Let's have him in," shouted Gresham, smashing his fist upon the table. "Let's have him in."

"Oh, very well," said Major Brace, much annoyed.

Soon the sergeant appeared, bringing with him the Indian, his hands bound behind his back. One glance Gresham gave him.

"Indian!" he ejaculated contemptuously. He stepped to the prisoner's side, seized the collar of the buckskin jacket, and with a fierce jerk ripped it open, displaying the fair skin of a white man.

"A dirty spy!" The next moment he was rolling on the floor in agony. A well-placed kick from the prisoner in the pit of the stomach had done for him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said René to Major Brace. "This cad insulted you."

"Are you a spy?" asked the major.

"I came here to set free my friend, who is unjustly detained here, chiefly at the instigation of this man, his enemy and mine."

"He's a dirty spy!" shouted Major Gresham. "General Van Rensselaer will soon settle him. Secretary Eustis has strong

opinions about spies. If he knew about this he'd string this spy up to that tree. And he will know about it, too."

"Take him away, Sergeant. We shall report this to the general."

"You'd better move quickly. There's going to be something doing to-morrow or next day. And you'd better watch him, too. You've got the most dangerous man in the Canadian army right there. You let one prisoner go."

"You are not my superior officer, Major Gresham. And what's more I won't take any criticisms or insinuations from you."

"All right. You may know your duty, but you fell down in the other case, and it was this man that fooled you too."

"That also I may say is not your business. The whole matter will be reported to General Van Rensselaer."

The report was duly presented by Major Brace. Major Gresham also took care to give his version of the incident, taking pains to point out the probable effect upon the government and especially upon the mind of Secretary Eustis, who had taken so strong a stand upon the John Henry affair.

The general, however, had his own troubles, and in abundance. His own lack of military experience, together with the lack of military training by most of the officers under his command, and the utter absence of discipline in the militia, produced a state of confusion among the troops assembled at Lewiston that made anything like orderly military action almost impossible. The ardor of the soldiers for immediate action had been inflamed to the highest pitch by the daring exploit of a young naval officer, Captain Elliott, in capturing two ships from under the guns of Fort Erie. The army demanded an immediate attack upon Queenstown, defended by a paltry three hundred men and three or four guns. They burned to wipe out the unspeakable humiliation of Detroit. Only let them have a chance! They would show these old and worn-out mercenaries of the British king what the freeborn sons of America would do to them! Against his better judgment General Van Rensselaer was forced, under threats of desertion, to yield to the demand.

His orders to Major Brace in regard to the alleged spy were definite and very imperative. In regard to young Brookes every

effort was to be made to capture him. He would doubtless be found lurking somewhere along the bank of the river. And as to the other, if he was proved to be a spy there was only one thing for it. He had no sympathy for spies. The camp was full of them. He would make an example of this one, especially as he seemed to be rather a dangerous sort of man, if Gresham was right. He was to be shot at sundown. This could not be postponed till dawn. They would have their hands full enough to-morrow morning. Major Brace was to preside, and Major Gresham was to be a member of the court-martial.

The court was ordered for the afternoon, but in the wild confusion prevailing throughout the camp it was toward evening before Major Brace could find time for it. He came into the orderly room hurriedly and at once proceeded with the case.

The prisoner was brought in with his hands tied behind his back, guarded by two soldiers. He was in a woeful condition. The stain had been removed from his face leaving it a dirty white. He was trembling in every limb. He had to be supported by the soldiers. The evidence of the morning was repeated and was ominous enough.

"Are you a spy?" asked Major Brace in a stern voice.

The trembling lips muttered something.

"Speak up!" ordered the major.

He reiterated his plea that he had only come across the river to get his friend out of prison.

"Major Gresham, you might tell the Court what you know of this man."

"I will, sir—and since this morning I have learned a good deal more about his activities. I have an officer outside, a Canadian officer, at present in our service, who can enlighten you. He was unwilling to give evidence, but I insisted."

"Call him and be quick. We have no time to waste on this sort of thing." The major obviously hated the whole business.

Gresham stepped out and returned with an officer wearing a Canadian uniform.

"Captain Marcle, sir!" said Gresham. The prisoner almost collapsed.

"You know this man? Tell us what you know."

"I would much rather not. I have known him in Canada for some years," said Marcle hesitatingly.

"Are you in our service?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you know your duty. Speak up, and do not delay the proceedings."

Marcle's evidence was fatal. The prisoner was one of General Brock's most trusted runners or spies. Was largely responsible for the capture of Mackinaw. Had led the overland attack upon Fort Detroit. Was frequently entrusted with responsible missions to this country.

"Missions? What do you mean? As a spy?"

"They might be called so, I suppose."

The prisoner was a ghastly object of pity.

"Have you anything to say?" asked the major.

There was no answer.

"You are here in an enemy country. You come armed. These pistols are found upon you. These are your weapons, I suppose?" pointing to two pistols upon the table.

The prisoner moved toward the table, looked at the pistols, nodded, and almost fell to the ground.

"Do you deny that you are that contemptible thing men call a spy?"

The prisoner tried to speak. His voice came in hoarse inarticulate sounds. His eyes turned backward in his head, he slumped to the floor and fell into a violent fit.

"Untie the poor devil and get him a drink, some of you," ordered the presiding officer.

With difficulty the man was revived and once more he stood trembling before the table.

"Gentlemen," said the major, "what is your verdict?"

"Has he nothing at all to say?" inquired an officer.

"Speak, if you have anything to say, before your sentence is pronounced," said Major Brace.

The prisoner raised a trembling finger and in a thick, almost inaudible voice he said, "These two men—are—both—my personal—enemies. I have—slapped this—man's face—" pointing to Marcle. "The other—" he swayed forward toward the table,

leaned on it—"the other——" Swifter than light his hands flashed forward. Another instant he was standing clear of the soldiers at the back of the room near the door, with the two pistols in his hands.

"Gresham!" he said in a quick tense voice, "tell these men if I can shoot. Speak or you die!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Gresham, "don't shoot. Yes! He is a devil at this game." Gresham was white to the lips.

"If a single man moves, four men die," said René quietly. "Gresham and Marcle, you will be the first. I shall pick an eye out of each. You two! Hands over your head! Face that wall! Quick!" His voice low, tense, deadly, compelled Gresham and Marcle to instant obedience. "You soldiers, don't move! Drop your rifles! Quick." The rifles clattered to the floor.

"Gentlemen, Gresham has seen me break six balls in six seconds. Am I right, Gresham? Quick, or I'll take an arm off you."

"By God! He is right!" said Gresham in a husky voice.

"Gentlemen, I repeat, if one man moves, four men will die. The first will be you, Gresham."

He backed toward the door—opened it and was gone. "Goodnight." A laugh came floating back.

Out in the dusk a whippoorwill called. A dog fox barked in reply.

CHAPTER XL

THE ATTACK IS ENDED

Away in the northwest, whence the low rumbling thunder could be heard, the vivid flashes of lightning revealed for an instant piled masses of dark cloud. The close still air was heavy with foreboding. Down by the water's edge a hundred yards from the Lewiston landing a whippoorwill was industriously calling. As if in response to the voice of the night bird a man was swiftly, cautiously making his way through the thick underbrush, flattening himself to earth at every lightning flash. As he drew near the roosting place of the bird he gave forth the quick sharp bark of a dog fox. Instantly the bird call ceased, and in a few minutes a dark form at his side made its presence known by a low guttural grunt. A moment later the two stood with hands clasped, speechless, and so remained for some time pressing each other's hands to their hearts.

"Running Boy no go dead," breathed Black Hawk, wringing the other's hand.

"Not by a long sight," replied René. "Hubert?" he asked.

"Come!" replied the Indian and disappeared into the bush. René followed and was soon in the presence of his friend.

In low tones the three exchanged their various tales and their joyful felicitations.

"What next, Black Hawk? How shall we get across?" asked René.

"Canoe gone," replied the Indian.

"They've been beating this bush all day—for me, I guess," said Hubert. "Scores of them. They just about walked over me. Black Hawk hid me. Great man, Black Hawk."

"They are attacking to-night," said René. "Thousands of them."

"We must wait, eh?" said Hubert.

"Not much! We will go with them—before them—if possible. I could swim that. I'd like to give warning."

Black Hawk grunted his disapproval. "No swim—go down fort—too much whi-s-s-h."

"Too much current? I can do it, but you can't swim it, Hubert, and you can't, Black Hawk. The Indians, strange to say, are afraid of water and are poor swimmers," said René, his eyes on the boiling current before them.

"H-i-s-s!" Black Hawk was flat on his face. The others followed his example. A flash of lightning showed ten yards away in an opening of the brushwood a soldier bent forward listening. A crash of thunder followed. Looking about they found Black Hawk gone from their side. The next flash, and a gruesome picture flared upon the night's black screen. They saw the Indian leap from behind like a catamount on the back of the soldier, bear him with a thud to earth. The following flash, and they saw the terrible hook sweep swiftly down and bury itself in the semi-unconscious soldier's throat. With a cry René rushed forward. Another gleam of white light revealed the savage kneeling upon the prostrate form, an uplifted knife in his hand.

"Stop that!" cried René in a horrified voice, hurling himself at the Indian. He was too late. Twice the knife fell before René could snatch the redskin from his victim. Like a demon Black Hawk leaped again, knife in hand, reaching for the scalplock of the dead man. René hurled him back with a straight left-hander on the jaw that laid him senseless on the earth.

"You devil!" said René, standing over him. As the Indian slowly recovered consciousness, he sat up, gazed stupidly about, suddenly leaped to his feet, and stood waiting, his face convulsed with fury.

"Hubert, let's cover up this man," said René, pulling the dead body into the thick underbrush. Together they covered the soldier with leaves and brush and then sat down, both white and sick. At a little distance from them Black Hawk sat, silent and sullen, nursing his wrath and waiting developments. Nearer and nearer came the storm. Between the thunder crashes they could hear the confused noise, the shouting and swearing of the troops crowded upon the landing.

"Let's go and see what they're doing," said René. "They'll hardly notice us in that mob."

About twenty-five yards from the landing they crouched among the bushes and there waited, observing the preparations for embarkation. Everything was in chaotic confusion.

Upon the top of the lofty bank the general with his staff stood watching the milling of the mob of militiamen swirling about the solid blocks of regulars who stood waiting their turn to embark.

"That's Captain Wool," muttered René. "He's a soldier. Look at his regulars. And up above on the bank that's General Van Rensselaer. He's no good as a soldier. Fine chap, good stuff, gentleman, and all that. General Wadsworth is next him, and a little farther down Colonel Chrystie of the regulars."

The landing stage afforded space for some half-dozen boats, each of which was supposed to carry twenty men. Farther up stream were other boats moored to the shore, some thirty in all. By their means six hundred men could be ferried in about ten or fifteen minutes over the tumbling, rushing water to the Canadian shore. At the extreme down-stream end of the wharf a boat piled high with oars was held in place at the dock by a long-shafted boat hook in the hands of a sailor, standing upright in the boat. The plan was that as each boat received its load, it should pass by this boat, take on its oars, and proceed on its way. In their eagerness to advance to the conquest of Canada the militia, in a disorderly rush, crowded down upon the landing and filled the first three boats waiting there. With utmost difficulty these men were disembarked by their enraged and distracted officers and pressed back up the hill to allow the regulars to embark.

"Wait here for me. I see something. Don't leave this place," said René and slipped away toward the boat rocking on the current there with its load of oars.

Meantime the storm had burst upon them with all its fury. The sailor in the boat containing the oars, under the violence of the nor'easter, was finding it extremely difficult with his precarious footing, to maintain his hold upon the wharf with his boat hook.

"Here! Let me have your hook," shouted René to him. "I'll hold you."

Gladly the man gave over his boat hook into René's hands.

With his hook fastened into the bow and with his feet firmly braced against a pile, René was able to hold the boat steadily in place.

"You've got her all right?" shouted the sailor, much relieved.

"You bet I have," replied René. Gradually, however, he proceeded to ease the boat away from the wharf till it began to rock and sway under the violence of the boiling current. Meantime, the regulars lined up on the wharf were taking their places in an orderly manner.

"Oars!" shouted an officer, "where's the oars?"

At the word René leaned forward upon his shaft and gently thrust his boat far out into the current, following himself with a silent headlong dive into the stream. The noise of the soldiers, the roar of the storm, and the swish of the raging current drowned the cry of the sailor standing upon his load of oars. Frantically he sought to release a pair of oars from the pile under his feet. They were huge and heavy. The violent sweep of the wind, the tossing of the boat made it impossible for him to fix the oars in their thole pins. Besides this, under the bow a swimming figure quietly headed the boat into the river till it was caught by the full force of the main stream and was soon lost in the darkness, making for the farther shore.

Meanwhile, from officers and soldiers rose frantic cries and curses demanding oars.

"Where is Sims? He had them just now. Sims! Sims!" cried out an officer through the howling storm. But only the mingling voices of storm and river answered his cry. Sims was out of hearing, well away on his voyage to Canada.

A hundred yards down the river a sopping figure in buckskins climbed slowly from the water and proceeded toward the landing uttering at intervals the harsh cry of the sea gull followed by the staccato bark of the dog fox. Disgusted, disappointed, raging, cursing, officers and men slowly climbed up the slippery banks and through the dark made their way back to their quarters. The first attack on Queenstown was at an end.

CHAPTER XLI

THE FIGHT FOR THE HEIGHTS

THE following morning, October 13th, half an hour before dawn, a second attempt at invasion was organized, the officers of the regulars in command. Boats, this time with oars, were lined up along the shore, each in charge of a noncommissioned officer. Some three hundred regulars were drawn up in line waiting their boats, which came in regular procession to the landing, received each its quota of twenty men, and pulled off into the darkness. A slight rain was drizzling down upon them. But no rain could damp the ardor of the invaders. Some twelve boats had gone off.

"Where are the rest of the boats?" demanded the embarkation officer.

"There are no more boats here, sir."

"Nonsense, there are thirty boats. Where are the others? Look up along the bank there, and be quick, the daylight will be here in a few minutes."

"No more boats, sir!"

With oaths deep and long drawn the officers ran along the river bank searching for the missing boats, but none were to be found.

"We will wait for the others to return," said the embarkation officer. "Please keep back your men there." This to a militia captain whose men, in their fear lest they should be balked of their desire to have their part in this attack, were beginning to crowd down the bank.

A crash of rifle firing from the opposite bank broke the stillness.

"By jiminy, they're at it! Hooray, let's at them! Here's some boats coming back! Come on!" There was a rush of militia down the bank which their officers vainly tried to check.

As each returning boat touched the landing it was immediately filled, and more than filled, and pushed off.

In their old hiding place René, Hubert, and Black Hawk were crouching, waiting their opportunity.

"Come on," said René, "let's slip over to the landing and take our first chance. Keep together."

The confusion caused by the impetuosity of the militiamen aided them. Mingling with the crowding men the three tumbled into the first boat that touched the dock. René seized an oar on the port side, yelling, "Come on! Let's go! The fight'll be over." Hubert, who had got hold of the starboard oar opposite to René, backed him up with urgent demands to push off. Suddenly the battery at Fort Gray let loose its twenty-four guns. A second returning boat barged into them.

"Get out of our way," yelled a militiaman.

"All right! Come on, let's go." René and Hubert plunged their oars into the water and with their boat half filled pushed out into the current. Other oars were thrust into their thole pins, and with some irregular splashing they were away. Over their heads whined the shells from their own battery, as well as the answering shells from the single gun at Vrooman's Point, a mile down-stream from Queenstown and from the two guns at Brown's Point, two miles farther down.

"Ease up," whispered René to Hubert, gradually swinging the bow down stream and heading straight for Vrooman's.

"Here, where you going to?" said an ensign, sitting in the stern. "Think you're bound for Niagara? Pull you, on the other side." René eased up his stroke for a few minutes. A volley of rifle fire spattered the water around them.

"Say! They're firin' at us!" cried René. "Let's get in nearer the bank." He threw himself with all his might upon the oar, pulling the bow down stream.

"Hold up there, not so hard, you're pulling her round!" cried the ensign.

"You fellows hurry up. I'm not going to be a target here all day." At this Hubert, in his haste, caught a crab and fouling the next man threw him out of his stroke. Daylight was now breaking. They were quite visible from Vrooman's, not more than one

hundred yards down stream. They could see some soldiers on the high bank.

"Say, let's get in closer to the bank," said René, pulling hard at his oar. "They'll get us here soon!"

As if in answer to his word a rifle spoke and a bullet splashed a few yards in front.

"Pull! pull!" cried René, working frantically.

"Stop that, you fool, you're going right into them. Stop rowing. No, not you," indicating Hubert. "You starboard fellows, pull. Let's get out of range." But Hubert in his excitement could not keep stroke but continually fouled the others.

"Get out of that and let someone row that can," ordered the ensign with a string of oaths.

"I can row all right," said Hubert, making frantic efforts to get his oar moving. A second and a third shot dropped inches from the boat.

"Say, they'll kill us! Hurry up, let's get nearer."

More shots came, one striking the boat. René sprang to his feet and waved a white flag.

"What's the use getting killed?" he said.

"Kill that coward!" ordered the ensign, clubbing his rifle and leaping for René.

"Here, Hubert, wave this!" cried René, flinging him his handkerchief. He met the ensign with a straight arm which dropped him in the boat. Two or three others sprang to their feet, one with his rifle trained upon René.

"Crack!" The man dropped with a bullet through his wrist.

"Halt there! I have three more here," said René. "The next man that moves dies. We are within range of those rifles. Don't be fools. They can kill every man of us." They could see a line of men with rifles upon the bank. Gradually the boat drew near Vrooman's Point, where a small detachment of York volunteers under Captain Heward were engaged in training their gun upon the boats crossing for Lewiston.

"Do you surrender?" cried Captain Heward. "Speak, quick!" A half dozen rifles aimed at them hastened the answer.

"Captain Heward, sir," cried René leaping for the boat as it touched the shore, "will you take our surrender?"

"René! By all the gods!" exclaimed the astonished captain. "What does this mean?"

"These men are your prisoners, sir. I am sure you will see that they are well treated, sir. They are comrades of mine!"

"Most decidedly! Men, lay your rifles down in the boat and step ashore!"

"Edward! Edward! It's me!" cried Hubert, springing ashore.

"What, Hubert?" In another moment the brothers were in each other's arms.

"I couldn't help it, ensign," said René to the noncommissioned officer, who was leading his men out of the boat in a state of bewilderment. "You see I had to get home, and there was no other way."

"Well, I'll be darned!" exclaimed the disgusted ensign. "So you were a blanked Canadian all the time. Well! I say it was a mighty slick trick, anyway. And I guess I don't blame you."

"You're a real sport," said René. "The fate of the day will determine your fate and mine."

The first boatloads of the attacking party were landing on the beach about a mile away.

"Let me have your glasses, Captain, for a look," said René. "That's Colonel Van Rensselaer, cousin of the general, leading them on."

The attacking party was received by a sharp volley of a company of the Forty-ninth on guard. A number of men and officers fell, the rest took cover under the rocks.

"By Jove! There! the officer is down. I believe Colonel Van Rensselaer is down. They are carrying him back to the boats. They are coming over fast. Jove! There's a boatload got it, sir—smashed to bits—the men in the water—something floating down—ghastly, eh?"

"Good work!" said a volunteer, working on the guns. "Wait till we get their range. Ah, that's better! Got 'em that time, Edward! Holcroft made a gunner out of you."

"Try a longer fuse, Edward," ordered Heward, taking his glasses from René. "Try them nearer the other shore. They're more crowded there."

They all waited anxiously while Edward sighted the gun.

"Hurrah!" shouted the crew. "Good man! Give 'em another!"

"How many guns have they, René?" inquired Heward.

"Twenty-four at Fort Gray. Two heavier pieces farther down the hill."

"Twenty-four! What are they shootin' at?"

As if in answer a shell came whining over the gun emplacement and landed in a field beyond.

The soldiers cheered in derision. But in spite of the excellent artillery from the single gun at Vrooman's—the guns at Brown's Point, two miles farther down stream were out of range—the little brass six-pounder at Queenstown directed by Captain Dennis, and the eighteen-pounder at the redan battery halfway up the mountain, the boats kept steadily landing the invading troops, which somehow got themselves hidden away out of sight.

"Where are they all gettin' to?" inquired a York militiaman of Edward.

"That's what's puzzling me," replied Edward. "They can't be scaling that cliff, there is no path up that cliff."

"Has the general been informed of the attack?" asked René anxiously. "Surely he ought to know."

"Oh, yes, a couple of messengers have gone down to the fort over an hour ago," replied Heward. "He will be here with the fort garrison before long. I wish he would come. I can't make out where those Yankees are going. They disappear into that bush. Where are they?"

"That's what is worrying me," replied René. "If you'll allow me, I'd like to do a bit of scouting up there, sir."

"Good idea! Away you go. Hello, here's the general! And look at Alfred! Look at the mud! He's had a run."

Loud cheers greeted General Brock as he rode up and drew rein beside the gun emplacement.

He waved his hand cheerily. "Well done, Edward! Excellent marksmanship! Ah, Heward, your company had better press down to the landing. We shall leave you here, Edward, with a crew. And René! How in heaven's name did you get here?" He reached down and shook René warmly by the hand.

"We have been doing our utmost for you, but had little hope of you. When did you arrive?"

Heward told him of the landing in a few words, for the general was in haste to go.

"This is the main attack, then, René?"

"Yes, sir, the main attack. Four thousand men waiting, a considerable number already have crossed. I should like to scout that hill, sir."

"Mount this dragoon's horse and ride with me. The rest follow with all speed. We shall give them a warm welcome. Come, my brave lads, push on! push on!" So saying he struck spurs into Alfred and dashed on toward the landing at Queenstown with his aides, Major Glegg and Colonel Macdonell, in attendance and René following.

As he rode through the village his soldiers, some three hundred of them, dispersed at various points along the line of the road, broke into loud cheers. Victory was now assured. Under the leadership of the general they were invincible. No enemy could withstand them. Straight through his cheering soldiers Brock rode to the hill to the redan battery, where eight artillerymen were handling the eighteen-pounder with good results. Dismounting, the general stepped into the little enclosure about the gun, greeted the artillerymen, and was about to give an order when René's eye caught a movement among the trees above.

"For God's sake, sir, look above you!" shouted René.

Down upon them were charging a number of the enemy, shouting and firing their rifles.

"Back, sir, back!"

"Spike the gun! Retire!" shouted the general glancing at the troops above him, and leading Alfred he ran down the hill followed by his men and made his way into the village.

Immediately, with cool and prompt precision, he formed the little force into line. Exposed to the fire of the American batteries from across the river and to a scattering rifle fire from the Heights, the veterans of the Forty-ninth, his comrades at Corunna and many another stricken field, and other York militia, about two hundred men in all, stood with rock-like steadiness while the orders were explained to the officers.

"Forward!" cried the general, leading the way. A swift run

brought them up the side of the hill to the shelter of a low wall, where they halted for the whole line to form up.

"Save your breath, men, you will need it all in a moment," cried the general cheerily.

A word of command, they are over the wall and up to the line of the general. But Captain Wool is ready. A withering volley, a second, the British line is halted. Brock deploys a small force to attack the enemy left flank. Wool promptly extends his line. Enemy reinforcements come pouring down the hill. Once more Brock calls for advance, waving his sword. A bullet shatters his wrist. René ties it up, sobbing meanwhile.

The tall form, resplendent in red and gold, straightened itself to its full height, and taking his sword in his left hand the general waved his men on. An easy mark for even poor marksmen. Thirty yards away a tall American sharpshooter in blue-gray jeans, a red kerchief showing at the open collar of his tunic, stepped coolly out from behind a tree, took deliberate aim, and fired. With a slight moan the general fell to earth, shot through the heart.

"Don't let them know. Push—on—brave York volunteers." They were his last words.

His men gathered about him, offering their bodies in his defence. Upon the target so made the enemy concentrated his fire. A veteran fell dead across the dead body of his general. It was Sergeant Major Ross, the hero of many a gallant fight. Others fell wounded.

"Disperse!" shouted Colonel Macdonell. "Don't bunch there, men. Push on!"

With a fierce yell the soldiers, Forty-ninth and Yorks together, charged forward, drove the enemy backward, but in the teeth of a well-directed fire from an enemy superior in numbers and in position they came to a stand, turned and slowly retreated down the hill, carrying the dead body of their general with them.

Halfway down the hill a party of stretcher bearers met them in charge of Dr. Charles Sumner.

"I heard of it. Is it too late?"

"God help us! It is too late," said Colonel Macdonell.

Upon the stretcher they carried him reverently down into the

village and into a little house by the roadside. But there was no time for lamentation, only for revenge. Besides, his work was still undone.

At nine-thirty Macdonell forms up the remnants of the last attack within the village. They are joined by the companies of York from Brown's Point and Vrooman's, some two hundred in all. Are these militia game? As to the Forty-ninth, they stand silent, grim of countenance, waiting only the permission to advance. They have often been driven back in attack. That troubles them little. In the last attack they never come back. And there is their dead general. But these Yorks just beaten and these fresh companies who have just witnessed their comrades' shattering defeat—are they game? They too have been under Brock's iron hand. They have learned obedience. Macdonell mounts, forms them up in Robert Hamilton's garden. Captain Cameron leads the Yorks, Captain Williams the Forty-ninth.

Once more the order is given to advance. Quickly they are at the foot of the Heights. With a rush they recapture the battery, the gallant Glengarry man cheering them on. Thirty yards away under thick cover, some four hundred of the enemy are waiting them. A shattering volley halts the advancing line. Macdonell falls, mortally wounded, his horse, killed, falls with him. Williams at the other end of the line is down. Cameron, under a hail of bullets, carries off Macdonell. Sullenly the line retires, carrying the wounded Macdonell and Williams with them. They retreat to Vrooman's Point, and there, angry like a bear licking its wounds, they wait orders. Driven back? Yes, but they have another attack in them.

The whole enemy line rocks the Heights with cheers. The Stars and Stripes flaunt victory over the redan battery. The battle is over! A courier is dispatched to General Dearborn, another to Albany with the glorious news. The shame of Detroit is wiped out. Canada is won!

The Canadian guns are silent, except the gun at Vrooman's, where Edward keeps steadily at work. The enemy convey their dead and wounded across the river. In large numbers the enemy troops are ferried across, and climbing the Heights by the fisherman's path disclosed by a traitor to Captain Wool, proceed to

fortify their position under Captain Totten of the Engineers. Lieutenant Colonel Winfield Scott comes over and takes command. General Wadsworth, with a force of militia, crosses and scales the Heights. General Van Rensselaer himself finally appears. Sixteen hundred of the enemy are solidly entrenched upon the Heights and at strategic points along the shore. When the remaining three thousand of their comrades are brought over the whole force will march upon Queenstown, wipe out the remnants of Canadian and British regiments left there, and so on to Fort George. A glorious day it is for the Republic.

But General Sheaffe is on the road from Fort George, with his four companies of the Forty-first, three hundred and eighty rank and file, a like number of Norfolk and Lincoln militia, and the redoubtable Captain Holcroft with his car brigade and field pieces. Sheaffe has heard of the disastrous doings of the morning. He moves steadily forward. There is no reckless haste in his movements. By eleven o'clock he reaches Vrooman's Point. Finds there the wrathful remnants of the Forty-ninth and Yorks. He deliberates as to the next move. A frontal attack of the Heights is not for him. Besides, with the enemy strongly entrenched in that impregnable position it would be folly. Carefully he makes his dispositions. Holcroft with his field guns will command the landing and prevent further reinforcements of the enemy. Two small pieces will strengthen the little brass gun in the village. Two hundred muskets, under Dennis of the Forty-ninth, wounded but indomitable, will hold the village. The main body will make a detour by the River Road and come upon the enemy in the rear.

On their way they are joined by a detachment of Forty-first and two flank companies of militia under Bullock from Chippewa, and later by a company of Negro refugee slaves from across the river and about one hundred and fifty Mohawks under Chief Norton. By three o'clock this little army, a little over a thousand all told, exclusive of Indians, begins its advance through the woods and fields upon the rear of the enemy. The converging wings are Mohawks, on the right the Forty-first with the Niagara militia, the center the Forty-ninth and the Yorks. The chief difficulty experienced by the officers in the approach is to

hold the line back, especially the center, the eager Forty-ninth burning for vengeance. The real battle of Queenstown Heights is on. The outposts of the enemy, such as are able to escape the fleet-footed Mohawks, dash in upon the main body with terrifying tales of the dread savages. Hastily Winfield Scott, who is in command, changes his front, with him General Wadsworth goes up and down the line, urging steadiness. General Van Rensselaer hastens back to Lewiston for reserves, a vain effort, he will find. Upon the wings the terrifying war whoops of the Mohawks reverberate through the thick woods. The American flanks crowd in upon the center or quietly slip away to the rear. Steadily the British and Canadian line advances, yelling madly and pouring in volley after volley upon the enemy already shaken by the converging Indian wings. The center under Captain Wool remains firm, delivering a deadly rifle fire upon the advancing column. The British center is getting out of hand. In their ranks René has found a place. Suddenly a tall American sharpshooter with a red kerchief about his throat stands out in clear view, taking deliberate aim.

With a wild hoarse cry, "There he is! Come on! Brock! Brock!" René leaps forward. The men of the Forty-ninth and Yorks level their bayonets and sweep onward with a fierce cry. "Brock! Brock!"

The tall American sharpshooter stands to meet René's attack, lunges fiercely. René lightly avoids, takes a quick step, leaps straight at him with a savage thrust at the red kerchief. His bayonet sticks out a foot beyond, red, dripping.

"Brock! Brock!" The vengeful cry from two hundred throats of the Forty-ninth and Yorks, the leveled bayonets, the desperate onrush of men mad for blood, break the enemy line. Wildly they rush for cover, everywhere followed by that vengeful, yelling, steel-tipped line. Through the bush toward the river many are flung headlong over the rocky cliff, pursued in their mad flight by the pitiless Mohawks, to the water's edge. There, huddled in terrified masses at the cliff's edge, they offer surrender.

"A white flag!" shouts a militiaman.

"White flag? I don't see no white flag," answers a Forty-ninth man, intent upon his deadly work. "Get on with it!"

"To hell with the white flag! There wasn't no white flag when Brock was shot," shouts a York.

At immiment danger to himself the gallant Winfield Scott carries a white flag to an officer of the Forty-ninth and then to General Sheaffe. With difficulty the maddened men are stayed in their work of vengeance.

Some hundred American soldiers lie dead upon the Heights with two hundred more wounded. General Sheaffe accepts the surrender of about nine hundred men. The battle of Queenstown Heights is over. A victory for Canada of vast importance and of profound moral influence. A victory but a victory bought at heavy cost. Three hundred and fifty dead and wounded lying scattered upon the bloody field may be replaced. Her chief loss can never be replaced. For at Queenstown Canada lost the only soldier of real genius she has ever known, Isaac Brock, whose name stands in equal honor in Canadian story as the savior of Canada with that of another British soldier, General Wolfe, who at the cost of his life gained his immortal fame as the winner of Canada.

As evening fell a long cortège wound slowly down the River Road to Fort George, consisting of detachments from the Forty-ninth, the Forty-first, and from every unit of the militia force of Canada, bearing to his grave in the Cavalier bastion of the fort the mortal remains of their beloved general. Through a vast throng of weeping citizens the cortège moved to the strains of martial music and the booming of minute guns, the guns of the fort on both sides of the Niagara answering each other in mournful tribute to him who for ten years had been the inspiring genius of his country's defence, hammering into an effective fighting force the farmers, clerks, artisans, and traders of Upper Canada, and becoming for all peoples and all ages a shining example of devotion, pure and high, to his country's good.

CHAPTER XLII

THE NEW RÉGIME

THE second week after Queenstown was one of gathering gloom for the battalion officers of the troops on Niagara frontier.

A new spirit was abroad, a spirit of defensive caution, and with this a new insistence upon the minutiæ of military routine, of spit-and-polish. The fine exhilaration of dash and venture, of swift decision and prompt action that marked the first days of the war was gone. The Armistice which inaugurated the new régime smote like a chill November fog upon the spirit of victory awakened at Queenstown.

After the close of the Armistice, on November 20th, a council of war was called at Fort George headquarters. The officers of most of the regular battalions, as well as the militia officers, were present. The last council of war was in their minds. The procedure was pretty much the same, but the spirit—how vastly different! Thick gloom rested upon the gathering, the gloom of uncertainty in plan, of hesitation in action.

As in the last council the report of the headquarters' runner lay on the table, the general reading from it.

"Immediately following the battle at Queenstown the enemy forces were completely demoralized. General Van Rensselaer has given place to General Smyth. Sickness and death are prevalent, desertions wholesale. For instance, two brigades have been made into a single regiment.

"Where did this take place?" the general's tone was incisive and challenging.

"At Fort Schlosser, sir. I saw the regiment," answered the runner, a slight surprise in his face.

"Whole companies with the tacit consent of their officers have stacked arms and departed for their homes. Of two thousand volunteers from Pennsylvania only four hundred and thirty-one would volunteer to cross into Canada. The following extracts from proclamations and manifestoes issued by the general would give some idea of the quality of the commanding officer and of the spirit of the men.

"To the Men of New York:

"For many years you have seen your country oppressed with numerous wrongs. Your government, although above all others devoted to peace, has been forced to draw the sword and rely for redress of injuries on the valor of the American people.

"That valor has been conspicuous. But the nation has been unfortunate in the choice of some of those who have directed it. One army has been disgracefully surrendered and lost. Another has been sacrificed by a precipitated attempt to pass over at the strongest point of the enemy's lines, with most incompetent means. The cause of these miscarriages is apparent. The commanders were popular men, 'destitute alike of theory and experience in the art of war.'" . . .

"Men of New York:

"The present is the hour of renown. Have you not a wish for fame? Would you not choose to be one of those who, imitating the heroes whom Montgomery led, have, in spite of the seasons, visited the tomb of the chief and conquered the country where he lies? Yes—you desire your share of fame. Then seize the present moment. If you do not you will regret it; and say: 'the valiant have bled in vain'—the friends of my country fell and I was not there. . . .

"These are extracts," said the general sharply, "where are the documents?"

"Here, sir," said the runner. "I did not wish to burden my report with them." The runner laid the documents on the table. The general continued reading:

"To the Soldiers of the Army of the Center,

Companions in Arms:

"The time is at hand when you will cross the stream of Niagara, to conquer Canada, and to secure the peace of the American frontier.

"You will enter a country that is to be one of the United States. You will arrive among a people who are to become your fellow

citizens. It is not against them that we come to make war. It is against the government which holds them as vassals. . . .

"Soldiers! You are amply provided for war. You are superior in number to the enemy. Your personal strength and activity are greater. Your weapons are longer. The regular soldiers of the enemy are generally old men, whose best years have been spent in the sickly climate of the West Indies. They will not be able to stand before you when you charge with the bayonet."

The reading was greeted with derisive laughter, with low-toned oaths.

"Attention, gentlemen!" The general's voice was sharp and peremptory. "You will please exercise restraint upon your language."

Like reproved schoolboys they sat in embarrassed silence. Lieutenant FitzGibbon, one of Brock's best, who rose from the ranks to be adjutant of the Forty-ninth, an Irishman, daring and impetuous, spoke up:

"The idea is, I suppose, sir, to show us just what special kind of ass this officer is."

"Obviously, Mr. FitzGibbon. But it is quite unnecessary to burden a runner's report with this sort of stuff."

René remained silent, with burning cheeks. This was a new experience for him. The reading was continued.

"An early attack is being prepared from Black Rock——"

"Your reasons, sir, for this opinion?"

"Two, sir. General Smyth's expressed preference for Black Rock as a point of departure, and the massing of troops and the collecting of boats at that point."

"Ah." The general proceeded with the report.

"A well-directed attack upon the camp at Black Rock would undoubtedly bring valuable results, might possibly annihilate the army there collected."

The general's face flushed a deep red.

"May I suggest that an opinion upon strategy, however valu-

able, hardly comes within the scope of your duty. You will confine yourself in future to facts."

"May I suggest, sir," interposed Colonel Nichol, Brock's quartermaster general, "that it might be advisable to discuss that point. I am only a colonial officer, but I know these people over the river. They are in a bad way, and I confess I should like to have a try at them. And what's more, I believe I understand the spirit of our men." The little Scot's voice, rich in burrs and very deliberate in manner, evidently produced a marked impression upon the company.

"It is a question well worth considering," quietly suggested Colonel Bisshopp, anticipating the general's explosion.

"The point will be considered at the proper time, sir," replied the general.

There was a general stiffening of shoulders. Both Colonel Nichol and Colonel Bisshopp were exceedingly popular officers.

"This will be enough of this report, gentlemen," said the general in a curt voice. "We will proceed to discuss the question of supplies."

With set face and smouldering eyes René stood waiting orders.

Again FitzGibbon spoke:

"With your permission, sir, I should like to have this runner attached to my command. I have a bit of special work I should like him to do if he can be spared."

"Certainly, sir. The runner is at your service," said the general with an air of complete indifference. "You will report to Lieutenant FitzGibbon. Now then, gentlemen, to business."

With the old Forty-second salute, taught him by his uncle and rendered in its most finished style, which aroused the amused surprise of the Colonials and the admiration of the regular officers, René stalked from the room.

Upon the conclusion of the council of war, FitzGibbon hunted him up.

"How would you like to do a bit of work for me, René?" he inquired.

"I shall do what I am ordered to do in future," replied René.

FitzGibbon laughed loud and long. "Got under your skin, me bhoy, eh? Well, ye'll get worse than that from him, let me tell

ye, and so ye will. He's a bit of a martinet, but he has his points."

"I have no interest in him," replied René shortly.

"Spoiled by Brock, eh?" laughed FitzGibbon again. "And, by the powers, that's what's wrong with meself. Lad, listen to me." FitzGibbon dropped his brogue and his easy tone of comradeship. "What's coming to us God only knows. But for us there is only one word, our duty. Brock took me from the ranks. He gave me books and made me read them. He knocked me about and put the fear o' God into me. But one thing he made me know—that it don't matter a curse what happens to me. The only thing that counted was the Forty-ninth and its fitness for duty. And he made them fit. Where he said go, they'd go, if it were into the gates of hell. Do you get it?" The Irishman's eyes were like blue flames, his voice ringing like the blast of a bugle.

"I get it. It's what he taught me too. I asked nothing better than that," replied René, his lips trembling. "Do you think I am wanting anything from this man? Did I do wrong in telling him all I learned?"

"You did not. It's what we all needed to know. And, by all the saints, give me the Forty-ninth and the Forty-first and the pick of our Yorks and Norfolks, and I'd like no better fun than a saunter across the river among those lads. But I've work for you to do. Are you ready?"

"You know I am. Only tell me what it is," said René fervently.

"Listen, then. I'm going to build up a corps of scouts. I want your lads and as many more of the same sort as you can get. Captain Peter Robinson told me about them. I want you to make them Indians for the woods and regulars for shooting and for steadiness; walk them, run them, starve them, half kill them, but make them men after Brock's heart. Can you do it?"

"If you give me the right to pick them and kick them out, I will do it."

"You have it. You are my adjutant. Colonel Nichol will give you your equipment. Do you know the bayonet?"

"I do. I know all the arms, bayonet, broadsword, rapier, pistol, gun, as well as any of your regulars. My uncle taught me."

"Did he, then? I knew that old fighter. He was a terror to the recruits. All right, woodcraft, shooting, and fighting like hell,

and never quitting till they are called off. Do you get me?" FitzGibbon was shouting now. "I see you do. Howly mother of God! we'll have a darlin' time, so we will." René waited. "That's all, and it's enough." René still waited.

"What is it?"

"There's something I want to tell you."

"Go on, then. Ye never need to ask leave of me."

"Willcocks is organizing a company of Canadian volunteers for the enemy. I want to round them up." FitzGibbon gazed at him aghast.

"He has some hundred men or so enrolled. He has promised them arms, equipment, rations in a few weeks. He has unlimited money."

"Tell me," said FitzGibbon slowly, "how in the name of all the fiends do you know that?" René told him in detail.

"And it is a serious thing for us just now, with this man in——" FitzGibbon held up his hand.

"Well, I'd like to round them up. Shall I need to get permission from headquarters?"

"Divil a bit. You've got authority now. Round them up, and I'll do the rest. The lousy traitors! I'll do the rest. The court-martials will be after I'm done with them. I promise ye."

René went from the interview a new man. The depression was gone from his spirit. He had passed into a new atmosphere, the atmosphere of the first days of the war. He was on the trail of the American Canadian volunteers. He went immediately that day to work. He took into his confidence Charlotte, Hope, and Chick. As a matter of fact, they were already in the scheme of things. Hope was supposed to be flirting with Marcle's wonderful plan of political grandeur in the new order of the conquest. René waited for word of his opportunity.

Meantime the military movements of General Smyth provided them with sufficient interest. On Colonel Bisshopp's suggestion René made an excursion across the river to the camp at Black Rock. The thing was perfectly simple. The discipline was sloppy beyond imagination. Volunteers in uniform and out of uniform, Indians, civilians, hucksters, farmers, visitors, came and went almost at will.

René returned on the evening of the 24th with the definite information that the attack was staged for the following night. Nothing, however, happened. It was afterward discovered that Colonel Winder, who was in command, had reported that his officers, on account of inadequate preparations, had declined to advance.

A second general order by General Smyth was issued for the 28th. An advance party actually did effect a landing at various points, but after a desultory and confused night of fighting was driven back with about equal loss to both sides. The main army in support, which was to have moved forward at nine o'clock, did not achieve embarkation till noon, which being the dinner hour, the troops were disembarked to dine. After dinner a council of war, after due deliberation, agreed by vote that the expedition should be abandoned.

On the 29th a third general order in inspiring and eloquent terms gave instructions explicit and final that the whole army should move off at an early hour the following day. Arrived next morning at the point of embarkation, a hitch occurred as to the proper apportionment of the various arms, and once more the troops were sent to bivouac in the woods about blazing fires.

On the following day, however, November 30th, some fifteen hundred troops, regulars and volunteers in about equal numbers, were actually afloat and under orders to take possession of the forts opposite, thence to proceed to the capture of Queenstown and Fort George with Kingston as a further objective in coöperation with the fleet. From this program there was to be no turning back. It was discovered, however, that certain troops were disinclined to proceed. A council of war was summoned. The question was put, "Shall we advance?" The response was a prompt and unanimous "No." The invasion of Canada was over. The fury of officers and men was indescribable. Officers broke their swords, men crashed their rifles against the trees. The egregious commander-in-chief of the army of the center barely escaped with his life. The Niagara frontier was safe for the winter months.

The American government was slowly learning that war could not be waged by congressional resolutions nor by fervid oratory

and eloquent manifestoes from officers whose military training had been acquired in lawyers' offices. Eustis gave place to Armstrong as Secretary of War and Smyth gave place to General Brown, a soldier of quite different caliber, as the Canadians were to discover.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE TRAITORS

René sat before his open hearth listening to the freezing rain pelting on his windows, seeing pictures in the fire, and ever in the pictures a face ivory-white in a frame of black curling hair, illumined with great black eyes. It was always so for him.

A knock, a timid, pecking knock, came to the door. He opened, and there she stood, the ivory-white face in its frame of curls, wet, glistening with the rain, and in the great black eyes appeal.

"Charlotte!" Surprised, hardly knowing what he did, he caught her in his arms, swept her in out of the night, and held her fast.

"René!" she cried, rushing her words, "Willcocks's volunteers are meeting at Chick's place to-night at ten. Chick rode over to tell me. There was no one at home, so I came."

"You are sopping wet. Wait." He dashed into the bedroom, returned, unrolling a parcel.

"Put these on!" he ordered, giving her the beautiful doeskin dress made by Lukowah.

"Oh, lovely!" she shrieked. "Whose are these?"

"Yours. I got them from Lukowah, the Wyandot girl, for you —but—never mind—get in there and put them on—while I look after your horse."

"Oh, René," she said with soft shining eyes. "You are so good to me always—and I—oh, I have been so horrid to you."

"No, never that," said René slowly. "I don't think you know. We won't speak of it just now. Get those on right away."

When he returned he found her standing before the fire.

"I've got the kettle on the 'swee,' as you say it, René, but have you no food in the house?"

He stood gazing at her. With hair done close to her head in a psyche knot, straight and slim she stood in the light of the fire,

a boyish figure, yet with the doeskins revealing the lovely girlish curves of her body. Under his ardent eyes the red came slowly up in her face.

"Aren't they lovely, René?" she said shyly.

"Lovely!" he replied and turned abruptly away.

"René, are you going to forgive me for that cruel thing I did at the ball?" she said, following him and touching his arm with timid fingers. "Nora told me all about it. Oh, I was mean. Can't you forgive me, René?" The dark eyes were misty, the curving lips tremulous.

"Charlotte, you are in my house, let us keep off that. There is no question of forgiveness. I was a fool. I am wiser now. Let me show you my larder. Come."

He led her into the bedroom, showed her the trapdoor under the bed, and brought her down through the tunnel into the root house.

"There you are: larder, arsenal, fort."

Charlotte gazed about in delighted wonder. On the walls hung rifles, a shotgun, two ancient pistols, and powder horn. On the shelves a generous store of provisions.

"Wonderful!" breathed Charlotte. "If ever I am chased by the enemy I shall take refuge here."

They took with them what they needed for the evening meal, returned to the kitchen, and together prepared supper. All the while, in this atmosphere of delicious intimacy, with this girl so alluring with her boy's attire, René was conscious of a kind of blissful madness against which it behooved him to be momentarily on guard. But so free of self-consciousness or embarrassment was she that the madness passed and the hour spent over the supper table became one of frank and jolly comradeship. After removing all traces of the supper and dousing the fire René brought the horses round, and they were ready for the road.

"You see, I am wearing your lovely doeskins," said Charlotte shyly.

"They are yours," he said curtly. "Now, let us away. I shall take you to your corner. You will be quite safe from there."

She laughed in his face.

"My corner is with you to-night, René."

"My dear girl, there may be all kinds of ructions—you would be terribly in the way."

"René, don't be silly. I'm going with you to the Radcliffe house."

"Come along, then." He had his own plan for her.

In almost complete silence they rode the three miles to the Radcliffes' lane. There, breathless with excitement, Chick met them.

"There are thirty of them—their horses are in the stable and cow shed. Your horses will go in the shed just behind the house near by. There's a ladder up to the back window, and the knot hole is rounded out a bit. Hope is going to meet you upstairs in the room above the office."

"Splendid, Chick—couldn't be better. You're a real scout."

Upstairs René explained his plan of campaign. At a certain signal Hope was to carry in a tray bearing glasses of cider. She was to trip and send the trayful over Willcocks's head. In the confusion René would make entry. Lying prone with his eye to the knot hole René commanded the whole group. He counted thirty present. At the moment Willcocks was pooh-poohing the possibility of Canada making a defence. "Within the next six months the war would be over. Here is the complete enrollment. One hundred and twelve names to date. One good smashing victory, and the recruits will come in by the hundred. And here is the pay roll." He laid an impressive bundle of notes on the table before him.

"Now, then, Hope!"

Everything went according to plan. At the crash of Hope's glasses there rose wild shrieks of laughter over Willcocks's plight. Before he had cleared his eyes from the cider René was at his back and had the package of notes in his pocket.

"Sit down, everyone!" His voice rang through the room like the blast of a bugle. "Willcocks, that cold little thing at the side of your head is the muzzle of my pistol. My finger is on the trigger, and it is a very delicate hair trigger."

A ghastly white-faced crew, they sat, rigid with terror, their eyes fixed upon that wicked little round steel tube.

"Listen carefully, all of you. I beg you not to move. If any man should accidentally move hand or foot I shall press this trigger, and Mr. Willcocks, a peculiarly venomous reptile, will be minus the top of his head.

"Ha-ha! A deplorable event." The cold, deliberate deadly tone held them as if smitten by paralysis. His hand moved to Mr. Willcocks's breast pocket.

"Now, you infernal traitors, sit where you are till you hear your name called, when you will pass through this door. Wait for your names." He backed from the room and closed the door.

With a yell Marcle sprang to his feet.

"He's alone! Surround the house! Rifles! Pistols! Kill him! He must not escape."

Up the stairs flitted René—through the window down the ladder where Chick had the horses waiting.

Like a bird Charlotte was after him.

"Go on, René!" she cried. "I'll follow."

"Go back, Charlotte! For God's sake, go back!"

But already she was in the saddle and hard after him.

A pistol shot rang out—a second shot. Charlotte drew level with Gypsy. A third shot—a rifle shot this time—crashed into the night. René swayed forward, recovered himself.

"All right! It's nothing!"

Soon they could hear through the still night air shouts of the pursuers and galloping hoofs on the frozen road behind them. Charlotte could see René slowly sinking down upon Gypsy's neck. Riding close to his side she reached her arm round him.

"I've got you, René. Let me hold you. Don't try to hold yourself up. Lean on me." On they pounded, every minute to Charlotte an hour. Gypsy, seeming to know the need for careful going, slowed down her mad pace. On! On! with the roar of the galloping hoofs ever sounding nearer.

They neared the lane. René was swaying loosely in Charlotte's arms.

"René, a minute more," she cried wildly in his ear. "We're at the lane. Just a minute more, dear René."

At the door René slumped from his saddle and lay.

Nearer came the galoping hoofs.

"Send—the—horses—off!" he gasped.

A slap on the flanks sent them galloping. She tore open the door and, seizing René under the arms, dragged him in.

They were at the lane now.

"Quick—the—tunnel," he groaned, dragging himself along the floor. She tore with breaking nails at the trap—in vain.

"René! I can't lift it!" she sobbed.

He struggled desperately to his elbow—caught the ring in his fingers and with her help raised the trap.

They were pounding at the door.

She dropped into the tunnel. Their pursuers were stamping about in the kitchen.

"Too late!" she sobbed. Reaching up, she caught René by the shoulders and dragged him down, falling with him to the ground.

They were stamping into the bedroom. She reached up and quietly snapped in the hook and sank down beside the semi-unconscious boy lying on the ground.

A moment only she lay. They might find the trapdoor any moment. Rousing herself to her full strength she dragged René through the door into the root house, barred the door, and sank down beside him, drawing deep, sobbing breaths.

"Oh, for a light! René, may we have a light?" she cried to him.

"Yes—quite—safe—tinder box—right—hand—door."

She looked at him. He was ghastly white.

"A little whisky and milk."

He began to revive.

"Oh, I must get your wound stopped!" she cried in desperation. "You are bleeding to death." Slipping behind him she removed her petticoat and tore it into bandages. With difficulty she removed his coat and vest. His shirt was sopping red. She covered her face, shuddering. But he was stronger.

"Good old girl," he said, placing his hand on her shoulder. "Pack that hole—tighter—that's good—pour a little whisky—into the wound—now bandage it tight." She fortunately was skilled in this work and soon had him comfortable. Outside and above they could hear tramping, shouting. She ran to the trapdoor and listened.

"They are not here. They have gone on."

"They are in the barn."

"We will burn down the blanked barn." That was Marcle's suggestion. "It's their lives or ours."

That, however, Willcocks would not have.

"Do you want to bring the whole neighborhood upon us?" he said. "No, my word is let's scatter and make for the other side. Ride hard home, get what you want, and make for the boats—you know where they are—and meet at the rendezvous at Lewiston."

Charlotte ran to René with the great news.

"Look out through the loopholes in the door, put out the light—push back the slot."

"They are mounting. They are riding off."

"Which direction?"

"Down the lane."

"Thank God!" He closed his eyes and lay, white and still. "A little more milk," he whispered. She gave him milk and whisky in small sips till gradually his strength came back.

"Charlotte—must get these papers to FitzGibbon at once."

"I'll take them."

"Can't let you. Risky—might meet some of them—I'll be able in a little while."

"Nonsense!" she cried with emphasis. "Absolute nonsense!"

A few minutes he lay quiet. Then, swinging his feet off the couch he sat gazing about him stupidly.

"Oh, René! You are mad! Lie down."

"I must go! I will go!" he said between his teeth. He staggered to his feet, clutched at her, and sank down again upon the couch.

"I can't," he groaned.

"Of course you can't!" she cried joyously. "But I can. Tell me what to do."

"Get these papers to FitzGibbon. They must be arrested tonight. I hate to have you go—but you must go. Drink some milk."

"Oh, I'm all right."

"Drink some milk, I tell you," he ordered.

Meekly she obeyed.

"Now I'm ready."

"Catch Gypsy—she'll be at the stable. Go the back way. You know the wood trail."

"I know, I know. But what about you, René?" she said anxiously.

"Put the milk and whisky beside me—some scones—I'm good for twenty-four hours. But go—go—for heaven's sake, go."

She knelt down beside him, put her arms round him.

"Dear, dear René!" she whispered.

His arms went round her, drawing her close.

"My dear, my dear, dear boy," she murmured. "You understand." She kissed him on the cheek.

"I understand—Charlotte."

She kissed him on the lips. There was no passion in her kiss. A shudder shook him.

"I understand—Charlotte—too well. Go—go!"

She rose quickly, the tears running freely down her cheeks.

"I'll come back. I'll come quickly." From the door she waved brightly to him and was gone.

Within the hour a pale, wan ghost challenged the sentry of Fort George and was ushered into Lieutenant FitzGibbon's presence.

"Don't speak," she said. "Let me tell you."

After she had poured out her amazing story she said:

"To-night, he said, Mr. FitzGibbon. To-night."

FitzGibbon strode to the door.

"Martin!" he shouted.

"Yes, sir."

"Ask Mr. Fenwick please to turn out the full patrol with full equipment, without a moment's delay."

"Yes, sir."

"Miss Brookes, I believe Mr. Eustace Burton is within call."

"Eustace? Is that necessary? Might it not waste time?"

"Well, he is acting adjutant to the general."

"Very well."

Eustace was summoned and listened with an amazed face to the tale.

"Have you informed the general?" was his first question.

"Not I!"

At this point the stamping and jingling of the patrol was heard outside the door. A moment later Fenwick appeared.

"All present, sir!" he announced.

"Hello, what's the jolly old patrol dashing about for, FitzGibbon?" asked Eustace.

"Going to round up those cursed traitors."

"But, my dear fella, what about the jolly old law courts and that sort of thing? Hadn't you better have a word with the general? Eh what? Rather a stickler for form, as you know."

"You tell him after we're gone, eh?"

"Oh! By Jove, rather not! Don'tcherknow FitzGibbon? You see, I'm responsible since you have told me. Really—you know! Better tell him. In fact, quite important. My word! Yes! Quite essential indeed."

"But, Eustace, they'll all be gone in an hour or so."

"But, my dear Charlotte, you don't understand. You see——"

"I see that the whole thing will be an utter failure unless someone acts at once. For Heaven's sake, why not get on with it?"

"By the powers! She's right, Burton. We'll go on our way. You inform the general of the circumstances."

"Ah! My dear sir, there are such things as regulations, eh what? Run along and see the general. He is still in his office."

"Oh, you make me so cross!" cried Charlotte. "There is a roll of traitors on that table. They are even now, as we talk, trying to escape, and you talk about regulations! And René nearly lost his life getting it for you." The girl's voice faltered.

"Saints in glory! You are right, my dear. I'll run myself to the general and——"

"Oh, promise me you will get them! Shall I tell René you will get them?"

"You may indeed! I'll move heaven and earth itself to get them."

"I shall tell him so," cried Charlotte. "Go! go! Don't mind me."

"I will. I will. Burton, you will look——"

"Oh, do go!" cried Charlotte, clasping her hands in entreaty. As Lieutenant FitzGibbon was rushing away on his errand the orderly appeared.

"Dr. MacCrimmon is not at home. We have sent him a message to come at once."

Charlotte wrung her hands.

"How terrible everything is! Will you please have the doctor follow me at once to René's house. He knows where."

"Certainly. Martin, you see about this. I'm away."

"Oh, thank you! So am I," cried the girl, moving toward the door.

"Where are you going, Charlotte?" inquired Eustace.

"To René. Good-night."

"But—I say—what?"

"He is wounded!"

"Why, yes—but, ah—you going alone?"

"Why not? Will you come with me?"

"Ah—gladly, my dear—but must get leave—on duty and all that you know—I——"

"Good-night! I can't wait."

"But, Charlotte—you know—it is most infernally queer, don't-cherknow—alone—and that sort of thing. Tell you the truth—alone? By Jove—I don't like it, eh what?"

"Eustace! René is badly wounded—and——"

"But, my dear Charlotte, at this time of night, and alone—nobody else present——"

"Heavens above! Are you thinking about a chaperon? Eustace! You are impossible at times!"

"My dear, I won't have it. Sorry, I must insist—pardon me—I cannot allow it." His face was quite white. His voice had lost its usual drawl.

"Allow it? Allow it? And René—suffering—perhaps dying——" She stood slim, straight in her buckskins, her face cold and set, gazing at him with burning eyes.

"Good-night!" she said calmly, "and—if you wish it—good-bye." She passed out of the door.

"My God—Charlotte—wait!" But the only answer was the clatter of Gypsy's hoofs on the frozen road.

For an hour the patrol stood champing and stamping in the chill December night and waiting the word to march. At the end

of that time Lieutenant FitzGibbon returned, walking very stiff and straight.

"Mr. Fenwick, will you please dismiss the parade?" he said.

Pursuant to the orderly and ordinary process of law the attempt to arrest the enrolled members of the company of Canadian Volunteers of America failed of result. That company, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Willcocks and Captain Marcle and other well-known officers, were safely over the river undergoing a somewhat strenuous course of training preparatory to the invasion of Canada in the early spring.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE TIDES OF WAR

"Good-morning, Mrs. Secord!"

"My heart! You gave me a start, René. Wait you." The little black-eyed woman ran out to the gate and looked anxiously down the road.

"Oh, they are gone, Mrs. Secord—I saw them safely off the place."

"But they come back about noon, René. That's two hours off. Come in, boy. You look an old man, worn and done. Let me bring you a drink of milk."

"It is what I want most awfully—I've been riding all night, getting some Indian reinforcements for John Brant at the Beaver Dams."

"Indians, René?"

"Oh, those Indians of ours are all right. We can keep them in hand. Those Western fellows of Tecumseh's run amuck when they see Americans. Even Tecumseh can't hold them then."

She ran into the house and returned with scones thick with butter and a pitcher of milk.

"Splendid, Mrs. Secord—you've saved my life," smiled René at her.

"It's what you did for my man that day at Queenstown. I will never forget that, René."

"How is James?"

"Getting on slow enough. I'm afraid he won't be able to join up for some weeks yet."

"Afraid! I wish they were all like that about here in the West."

"Yes, that man Willcocks is about among them, telling them it's no use to fight and all that."

"Willcocks?" René's weariness fell off from him like a mantle. "Is he about here? God only give me a chance at him."

"But the war is going bad, René, isn't it?"

The flashing black eyes were full of anxious fear.

"Not too good. Proctor did splendidly at Frenchtown. With five hundred soldiers, and Tecumseh with five hundred Indians, he slipped across the ice, defeated General Winchester with a thousand of Harrison's men, and captured their general. But he failed badly at Fort Meigs. He is really in hard luck. Awfully short of rations, and his Indians starving. Then we lost York."

"York? Ah, yes, that was terrible. How was that?"

"Stupidity and carelessness—Sheaffe made no preparations—had guns but didn't even mount them—so when Chauncey and Dearborn with their sixteen ships of war and two thousand men appeared before York, Sheaffe with his seven hundred couldn't do much. That was the last of Sheaffe. He is gone now, thank Heaven."

"Terrible! What about Fort George, René?"

"Vincent did his best with his thousand men against an army of six thousand, and the guns from four warships and Fort Niagara pouring shot into him at Fort George. He lost heavily but pulled out most of his army. Then we lost at Ogdensburg. Prevost, the coward, when we practically had the Americans on the run—they had actually burned their own ships and stores—Prevost, cursed coward, called off the attack."

"Oh, René, are we going to lose our country?" cried the little woman, the tears running down her cheeks.

"Not yet, please God. Not by a long way. Vincent is holding strongly at Burlington. He is a great fighter. Cheer up, we aren't beaten yet. Now, good-bye, I must be off."

"Hark! Wait, René." She dashed off to the gate. "Oh, they are here! René! René! Where can you—— God help us! Oh, why did I keep you?"

"How many?" said René.

"Six. Where can you hide? Ah! Too late!" She wrung her hands in grief. She ran across the yard and opened a back gate just as six troopers under an officer rode in from the road.

René drew his pistols and stood waiting.

"Hello, a Britisher!" cried the officer, reaching for his carbine hanging at his saddle. "We've got you, my boy!"

"Hold there!" cried René covering him. "Not yet, my lad. Don't move, please, if you want to live."

The six men sat, uncertain what to do.

"It is fair," continued René pleasantly, "that I should explain. Mrs. Secord, kindly retire into the stable. Thank you. Good-bye. Now, sir, let me explain the situation. In the woods a hundred yards away are some fifty Indians, Shawnees, wild Western devils. If they hear shooting they will be here in about fifteen seconds. You may get me, but they will certainly get you, and very unpleasantly. Further, you observe, these are double barreled, hair trigger." He lowered his voice and spoke slowly and impressively. "They never miss, nor do I. I am going out by that gate."

"Like hell you are!" shouted the officer, digging his spurs into the horse and jerking at his carbine.

Like the four syllables of a single word four pistol shots rang out. The officer and three men dropped from their saddles; a fifth, shooting wildly, was unhorsed by René's sudden charge; the sixth, fumbling at his carbine, saw René dash through the gate and down the road, a gay laugh ringing back at him.

"Ha-ha! next time you'll take my word for it." Loading his pistols as he rode, René came upon his Indians dashing toward him out of the woods. "Come back this way!" he cried waving to them. A quarter of a mile farther on he waited for them.

"Shooting?" inquired the chief.

René nodded. "You go this road, Chief. See? Beaver Dams, on the road to Burlington. Meet John Brant in the woods this side of the Dams. Nine, ten miles. Look at your map. Go quick—soldiers come."

The chief smiled. "Soldiers come? Wait here. Good."

"No," said René sharply. "No, Chief." He tapped himself on the breast. "You go Beaver Dams, Burlington, what?"

The chief, disappointed, nodded sullenly. "Me go John Brant."

"All right! Off you go."

Silently the Indian slipped into the woods, and René took his way toward the Brookes Manor House, where he was to meet FitzGibbon.

He found both FitzGibbon and Hubert at the Manor with the

young ladies Hope and Charlotte, together with Miss Elspeth, all engaged in gloomy conversation.

"Anything cheerful, René?" was FitzGibbon's greeting.

"Had a rather cheerful argument with a patrol at Queenstown while I was chatting with Mrs. James Secord."

"Tell us, boy!" cried FitzGibbon. And René gave him the bones of the story.

"Bully, boy! Be jabers, that's a bit of cheer, annyway," said FitzGibbon. "And the Indians?"

"I got you about a hundred of Brant's men and another hundred Western devils. You'll have to watch those fellows."

"We will! We will! That will make about four hundred in all. That will help to keep Chapin's lambs in check."

"How is the general feeling?"

"In the very greatest spirits. He is holding a strong position, though with many odds against him. Thank God, Dearborn is fat."

When the conversation became general Charlotte came and sat down beside René.

"Oh, it is all too terrible," she said. "And you are looking so worn."

René laughed at her. "You don't look too peart yourself, Charlotte. Too much hospital."

"The wounded boys! So plucky, so jolly. They break my heart, René."

"Don't listen to her," cried FitzGibbon in a loud cheery voice. "They are having a wonderful time, and they well may, what with pretty nurses doing Down South breakdowns, and young Scottish maidens doing the Highland Fling. They're the boys that have the good times!"

"Tell me, Charlotte."

"Oh, it's nothing—Nora taught me a breakdown, a double shuffle, and we did it for the poor dears. But Miss Elspeth really is the première danseuse of the wards." And Charlotte gave a vivid picture of Miss Elspeth's triumphs.

"She came into the ward one day," interposed FitzGibbon, "and found the doctor cheering them up with the 'MacKintosh

Lament' and 'Lochaber no More,' av ye plaze, an' no less. Well, you ought to have heard her! They tell me the doctor was utterly overwhelmed and routed. 'Give the boys a reel,' she cried. And he did—'Tullochgorum, the Reel of Tulloch'—and had them whooping like Indians. When he came to the Highland Fling, didn't the giddy young thing up with her cotties an' step it off in grand style. Me bhoy! The ward was a wreck, an' the bandages had to be all tightened when she was through. God bless her an' God bless them all! They break the heart o' me." FitzGibbon's voice suddenly broke and he, unashamed, dabbed at his eyes with his handkerchief.

"Och, now, man, but you are the grand story-teller whatever," said Miss Elspeth, shaking her curls at him. "The poor laddies must have some cheer, and the young ladies, ay, and the old ladies as well, will be doing what they can for them."

"Well, we must away," cried FitzGibbon. "Where is that young adjutant of ours, I wonder?"

"Oh, he will be cheering up Nora, I warrant you," said Miss Elspeth, "and she needs it."

Charlotte caught René's glance.

"Oh, I'm not worrying," she said, turning her head. "I have no time and no heart for that sort of thing. I'm a nurse."

"Well do I know that, Charlotte," said René in a low voice. "At least, you were to me. Nurse and more than nurse."

Her hand slipped into his, her dark eyes rested wistfully on him.

"You understood, René?"

"Yes, I understood."

"Not fully, René. That night when you were so weak, so helpless, and in such pain, I wanted to take you in my arms and hold you like a baby."

René dared not look at her. He bent his head as if to pick something from the floor and kissed her fingers.

At this moment Nora burst into the room.

"Oh, such a ride! Such a glorious ride! Such color, such air!" she cried.

"Look here, young fellow," said FitzGibbon, "don't you know you are in enemy country? Their patrols are everywhere."

"Not where we were," said Eustace with a look at Nora.

"As a matter of fact, we have no right to be lingering here so long," said René.

"General Dearborn has guaranteed immunity for private houses," said Charlotte.

"Not for enemy officers," said FitzGibbon.

"And not from Chapin and Willcocks," said Hubert. "Wouldn't they love to run into us here."

"And wouldn't we love them to," said René.

"Away, away! quick, march!" said FitzGibbon.

When they had made their farewells the young ladies sat down for a talk.

"Good time, eh, Nora?"

"Ripping, as you would say. A glorious ride! Eustace is such a dear, such a clever talker. He has seen the world, too."

Charlotte sat silent. She was not listening.

"You are not thinking of Eustace?" challenged Nora.

A faint flush tinged Charlotte's cheek. "No, I was thinking of the war."

"And that boy that has just gone," said Nora, shaking her finger in her face. "Now, be honest."

"Well, yes. Some day he too may——" She shuddered, covering her eyes with her hands. "A hundred and seven dead that day after Fort George on that field. I see them yet. Mangled, twisted, horribly——"

"Stop, Charlotte! Stop!" cried Nora. "How can you?"

"I see it at night," whispered Charlotte. "If I had not to tend the wounded I should go mad."

"Oh, let's not talk war. I can't bear it when our men are beaten, and it's worse when they win, as at York. There, you remember the awful explosion. Four hundred men blown up!"

"Four hundred men? Nonsense!" cried Charlotte. "The latest advices—René told me—say they lost in battle some twenty killed and some forty wounded, and in the explosion just thirty killed and two hundred and twenty-eight wounded. It was bad enough. But it was a sheer accident for which that old fool Sheaffe was responsible. Oh, I hate him! He meant to blow up the magazine and laid the fuse before he left. The fuse was touched off by acci-

dent. I don't wonder your soldiers went mad. They thought it was a piece of treachery."

"I'm glad to hear it. I feel better. But don't talk about the war. I can't bear it."

"Nor can I, Nora, but Fort George I can bear better than York. At Fort George last week our men were led by a real soldier and a brave man. There is nothing to be ashamed of."

"Think how we feel about that coward Hull at Detroit, and that silly fool Smyth at Black Rock," said Nora.

"I know. It hurts worse than losing. Vincent at Fort George could not have done better. He had just a thousand men to meet with four ships and their guns and between five and six thousand soldiers. Hubert says that your naval man Perry handled the disembarkation awfully well. Our men did all that men could do and Vincent saved his army, except those that he had to leave on the field. Oh! I shall never get that sight washed out of my mind." Once more she covered her eyes. "There were so few to help!—not even with a drink of water. Oh! the poor wounded! Torn and twisted into such queer and awful shapes. Over one hundred dead and nearly two hundred wounded. But they fought so splendidly—the Eighth lost two hundred out of three hundred; the Lincolns lost eighty-five killed out of one hundred and twenty; the Glengarry men seventy-seven out of one hundred and eight. They died bravely. I don't pity the dead so much. But the wounded——" Her voice broke. With Nora's arms about her she broke into wild sobbing. "I'm very tired and very weak. I can't let Father or Mother see me cry."

"Cry away, darling," said Nora, weeping with her. "It is about all we women can do. For me it is all very terrible, too. These wounded are not my people, but they are yours, and it is my people who have done it."

"Oh, but we are trying to do the same for yours. Isn't it terrible to be glad when people are killed and wounded? And I am! I am! Oh, think of it, Nora! I just rejoice when I hear that so many Americans are killed!"

"Don't say it! Don't! Don't! Now, that's all about the war just now. Let's go out into the orchard and see the lovely blossoms and forget the horrible things. I dare not go in to Daddy with

red eyes. This war is killing him. He can't get better. You are all so lovely to him. Come along, we'll talk about the men." She dragged Charlotte off with her into the garden, where all the new flowers of early summer were showing their lovely faces.

As they wandered about they chatted cheerfully about their men friends.

"You are mean about that boy," said Nora reproachfully. "Why don't you let him go? You keep him dangling after you."

"Dangling? What nonsense you talk! And what about you with Eustace? Dangling, indeed! It's a good thing I'm not jealous. The way you two go on together is disgraceful."

"Poor Eustace," said Nora with a little reminiscent smile. "He is such a dear. I am really fond of him. And he—well, we are very good friends. And you treat him so badly."

"Oh, you can't make me jealous. Go as far as you like."

"I wonder! No! I don't believe you would care if I took him from you. It would serve you right. It would pay you up for the way you treat René."

"Treat René?"

"Yes, René and Eustace too. Disgraceful, I call it. Eustace you don't want—you want what he has. René you want but haven't got the nerve to take him. Playing with the boy's heart."

Charlotte turned on her fiercely. "You dare!" she panted. "You dare! You—you——"

"Never mind the heroics, my dear. You can't frighten me. I was born in the South. Tell me if you can—if you dare—on your honor, which you love."

There was a breathless pause.

"Take a look at yourself! Oh, I have no patience with you! Ah! You can't!"

"I can!" cried Charlotte, furious.

"Then you daren't!" After a long silence Charlotte, with head high, turned and walked into the house and straight to her room. Nora threw herself down upon the grass in the shadow of a tall hedge and there lay with shoulders shaking.

CHAPTER XLV

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

The three rode warily along the back concessions and by bridle trails known to René till, in the early morning, they came upon some outposts of the enemy army at the base of Burlington Heights. Retreating to the top of the encampment, they rode northwest and from a lofty lookout had the whole plain before them.

"You know this terrain here, René. Pick it out for me," said FitzGibbon, handing him his glasses.

"Never mind the glasses," said René. "Right in front of you Lake Ontario; a little to the left, Burlington Bay. You ought to be able to pick out the enemy boats along the shore. Right off the bay, that dark green mass is a swamp through which flows Stony Creek into the lake. The enemy is right in that nook there. His right protected by swamps, so he thinks."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, there are trails through the swamp, if you know them. His center rests there on each side of Burlington Road. His left right below us here in touch with the Heights."

"A mighty good position, too," said FitzGibbon. "Clear front and both wings protected."

"Protected? Perhaps."

"What do you mean?"

"As a matter of fact, either flank is wide open to men who know the trails. I can take two hundred men right into his camp on either flank, and he'll never know anything about it. They think we are demoralized and scooting for our lives. Their only anxiety is to catch up with us."

"By Jove, what a chance!" exclaimed FitzGibbon. "I wonder how they are lying. What outposts do they hold?"

"Let's go and see," said René coolly.

"Be gorrah, me bhoy, an' ye have it!" cried the Irishman in great excitement. "Hubert and I will ride on to our Forty-ninth headquarters and have a talk with Harvey. You take some of your lads and have a look at them. How long will it take ye?"

René examined the country.

"It will take four hours' hard walking to do it right."

"And that's the only way it must be done!" exclaimed FitzGibbon. "Hoorooh, me bhoys! There's a bit of speed ahead of us. Your lads are down on our right flank there. We will pick 'em up." Joyously the wild Irishman led the way through a bush trail on the gallop toward the scouts' camp. After a couple of hours' smart going René drew rein in a thick covert of spruce and cedar.

"What now, then?" inquired FitzGibbon.

"We're here," said René. "You're covered now where you stand. Wait!" He gave the shrill, nasal cry of the blue jay. It was immediately answered by the sharp call of the crow. Again René sent out the long soft wolf howl. The quick staccato bark of the dog fox answered from the bushes at their side.

"All right, Black Hawk," said René, and the Indian glided into sight.

"By Jove!" exclaimed FitzGibbon.

"How many scouts, Black Hawk?" asked René.

Black Hawk opened the fingers of his hand six times.

"Thirty, eh? How do the enemy lie down there?"

The Indian stepped to a birch tree, slit from it a roll of bark. The three men slid from their horses and gathered about him as he stretched the bark upon a smooth rock and began to draw lines with his scalping knife.

"Take this," said René, giving him a lead pencil.

Black Hawk drew a few swift lines on the bark with crosses here and there and to René in the Mohawk tongue laid the plan of the American camp before their astonished eyes.

"Other side far away. Not know. Find out soon!" he said.

"How soon?" asked René.

Black Hawk held up three fingers. "Sun so. No moon." He pointed to the clouds.

"Three hours after sundown. Eh?" said René. The Indian nodded.

"Wonderful, begad!" said FitzGibbon. "René, we will meet you at the Forty-ninth headquarters three hours after sundown."

Before the time specified Colonel Harvey and his officers were gathered in consultation in a tent snugly hidden in a thick copse. Before them, reaching from Lake to Heights, could be seen the smouldering fires where the enemy had prepared their evening meal. There was no attempt at concealment.

"They are evidently quite unconcerned about us," said Colonel Harvey, standing at the tent door.

"They think we're on the run, sir," said FitzGibbon.

"Well, we can't run much farther," replied Harvey with a grim smile. "When will your scouts be along, FitzGibbon?"

"An hour yet, but you never know what will happen."

As he spoke they heard a whippoorwill call in the bush far on the left.

"Is that a bird, now, do you think, Hubert?" cried FitzGibbon.

"One can't tell in these parts any more."

Again came the call.

"A bird, of course!" said Harvey. "The whippoorwill. I have often heard it in these parts." From the bush on their right came the bark of a dog fox.

"They are coming, sir. They'll be here in fifteen minutes," said Hubert.

"Coming? Who?"

"Our scouts, sir. Didn't you hear that fox? And the whippoorwill? When they go together, it's neither dog nor fox."

"Good Lord! Do you mean these birds and beasts are not birds and beasts?" said Colonel Harvey.

"We shall see presently. Ah, I thought so. Here he is." As he spoke a sentry appeared with René.

"My men are coming in, sir," he said, saluting.

"Quite all right. The sentries are warned," replied Colonel Harvey. "Been round the enemy's lines?"

"Yes, sir. Black Hawk will be here in a few minutes. He had to come through the swamp." Before the expiration of the three hours set the scouts were all in, their faces gleaming, their clothing soaked with perspiration.

"Any of them caught?" asked Colonel Harvey.

"Caught, sir?" said René.

"Yes. Caught by the enemy. Did they all get through?"

René smiled and repeated the question to Black Hawk.

"No see fox at night," he said quietly.

A laugh went through the tent.

"Well, now for the report," said the colonel.

"May I have a bit of paper and a few minutes with my men, sir? I think I can give you a sketch of the lie of the enemy camp."

With his scouts grouped about him Black Hawk began to question them. In terse quick words the answers came, while René drew lines and made marks upon the chart before him. When all had finished he spread his map before the colonel and explained its features, receiving now and then a correction or suggestion from the scouts.

"There it is, sir. As well as we can make out by feel. It is difficult to get distance in the dark. You must judge by your rate of walking—very difficult in a bush and swamp."

The map showed the center of a long-drawn front held by artillery. Behind the artillery at some distance dragoons and a small body of men. On either flank larger bodies of troops somewhat widely distributed. The enemy left flank touched the Heights, the right a thick swamp. On the right front Stony Creek flowed diagonally through the camp to the lake, where a very considerable body of troops were guarding the supply boats. Outposts were everywhere, but most of them were asleep. The enemy evidently felt quite secure. That a beaten foe should attack was quite outside their scheme of military tactics.

"What do you say, gentlemen? What do you think, Major Plenderleath?" said the colonel, turning to a keen, dark-faced young officer.

"Let's have a go at them, I say, sir. Let's get some of our own back!" His word was echoed by all present.

"And the plan? Of course, there's only one plan. An attack right here with a body of picked men." His finger was on the artillery.

"Right, sir. The Eighth are ready to go, sir," said a hard-bitten grizzled veteran, Major Elliott.

"The Forty-ninth place is the center, sir," said Major Plenderleath.

"Thank you, gentlemen, the general will decide. We will probably use you both."

The plan finally decided upon was simple and straight going, depending for its success upon the steadiness of the soldiers. Seven hundred men picked from the Forty-ninth and the Eighth were to attack the center, capture the guns, the wings in the meantime to make noisy feints.

"Remember, we are not to overrun our attack, and we must fall back again upon our lines. Keep your men well in hand, Colonel Harvey."

The plan worked to perfection. The outposts were quietly bayoneted as the line advanced, but while still three hundred yards away from the guns the attack was nearly wrecked by the premature firing of a musket.

With a shout Colonel Harvey ran up and down forming the line while every moment more and more of the enemy were crowding in toward the guns. Seeing the danger Major Plenderleath sprang to the front, shouting, "Forty-ninth for the guns, charge." One volley of their muskets, and the men of the Forty-ninth and Eighth dashed forward on the run with leveled bayonets, yelling like men possessed of demons. The enemy made a gallant stand. The result, however, was inevitable. The senior officers were far in the rear. The company officers lost control of their men. They all crowded toward the center. That deadly, rushing wave of steel completely demoralized them. The din upon the flanks was terrific. It seemed as if Vincent's whole army was in the attack. In an hour all was over. The British withdrew to their lines. The Americans, reinforced by their rear guards, returned to their camp after daylight, but only to burn and destroy their stores, and retreated toward Forty Mile Creek leaving in the hands of the British both their generals, Chandler and Winder, one major, three captains, one subaltern, nine sergeants, four corporals, and eighty privates, together with guns, horses, and ordnance. Reinforced from Fort George at Forty Mile Creek the enemy made a temporary stand, but attacked by the fleet and

pursued by the Eighth Regiment and some mounted infantry and the scouts, they retreated to the shelter of Fort George.

The American forces unquestionably had received a serious reverse at Stony Creek. The moral effect was infinitely greater than the physical disaster. The loss in casualties was comparatively insignificant to an army so much superior in numbers to the opposing forces. But that a beaten army upon whose trail they had been hard bent for ten days should unexpectedly turn at bay and hurl them into headlong retreat with the loss of their two generals, a large number of officers, and a very considerable amount of arms, ordnance, and stores shook the morale of the whole army.

The invading forces found themselves upon the defensive. Vincent was immensely heartened by his victory and much strengthened by the arrival of contingents from two famous battalions, three hundred men from the Eighth and the One Hundred and Fourth, the New Brunswick regiment, the "Snowshoe battalion" which under the redoubtable Harvey had tramped on snowshoes in the dead of winter from New Brunswick to Upper Canada. He followed up the disintegrating blow at Stony Creek by a prompt advance and established a new line within some fifteen miles of Fort George, with its left flank, under Major De Haren, at Twelve Mile Creek on the lake, and its right flank some seven miles inland at DeCew's Falls, where FitzGibbon and his company of scouts made their headquarters at a stone house on the St. David's Road known as DeCew's, with the Indian contingent of Mohawks under John Brant camped near by. The remainder of the advance guard rested some seven miles behind, De Haren on the Burlington Road under the command of Colonel Bisshopp.

It was a most skilful and effective disposition of Vincent's scanty forces. From this line the American patrols were being continually harassed by FitzGibbon's scouts and Indians. At any time, day or night, and at any point within fifteen miles of Fort George, these invisible and deadly foes might strike.

General Dearborn, fretting under his losses and fearing a gradual narrowing of his environment, determined to destroy FitzGibbon's annoying nest of scouts. He accordingly dispatched the

Fourth United States infantry regiment under Colonel Boerstler, a capable officer, with two other companies of regulars, a troop of light dragoons and a detachment of mounted militia under the notorious Dr. Cyrenius Chapin—some six hundred in all upon this business. With them went also some light artillery and two ammunition and supply wagons.

On the morning of the 23d the patrol at Queenstown, which was in the habit of getting its baking done by Mrs. James Secord, discussed among themselves the details of the expedition which that evening was to set out from Fort George to put an end to FitzGibbon's annoying practices. They gave no heed to the black-eyed little woman flitting about the kitchen attending to their wants, while at the same time caring for her baby and wounded husband as well. As she listened to their talk her heart burned. She hastily consulted with her husband—she must get word to FitzGibbon at all costs—some twelve miles distant by road. The roads would be patrolled—she would take to the woods —the streams were in flood—there were always logs across—it was the season for the bears running and the lynx were out—she would take her chance—she could not be held back. She rolled some bannocks in her apron, kissed her husband and her baby, and with her milk pail over her arm set forth to her morning milking.

That same evening René, accompanied by McCloy, who had developed an amazing gift of self-effacement while on the trail, was scouting along the bush trail paralleling the River Road. They heard in the distance the rumble and tramp of Boerstler's expedition nearing Queenstown. Guessing, after investigation, its possible objective, René sent McCloy hotfoot to his chief with the information, he himself keeping in touch with the detachment. Cutting across country, McCloy reached DeCew's after a hard run of about four hours. His information was necessarily vague and fragmentary, but while they were discussing it one of John Brant's men appeared at the door.

"Woman," he said and ushered in a little woman, bedraggled, spent, shoeless, but indomitable.

"Madame, you are ill," cried FitzGibbon. "Let me bring you some refreshment."

"No, sir, not till I tell you my news," she said, gasping. Hurriedly she told her story. Then she sank back exhausted.

"From Queenstown? In this terrible heat? My dear lady, do you know that you must have traveled twenty miles at least to-day back and forth through that bush? You have brought the confirmation and the details we greatly needed."

"Confirmation?" she asked. "And I——"

"No! We had no details, Mrs. Secord. We needed your message. We know now what to do, thank God."

"Oh, very good! At any rate, I had to do it."

"Had to do it? My dear lady, were all our men and women of your spirit no enemy could conquer us."

Immediately FitzGibbon had his arrangements on foot. John Brant was to hurry and ambush the advancing column. Colonel Bisshopp and Major De Haren were advised of the approaching attack and were urged to send reinforcements.

The speed of Colonel Boerstler's advance forestalled those arrangements. He was within two miles of DeCew's before FitzGibbon was aware. At that point, near the Beaver Dams, however, he was attacked, harried by Brant's band of Indians, which ever increased till it reached four hundred in number. Blocked in a ravine before and behind under a hail of shot from invisible foes, demoralized by the indescribable din of the savage yells, Boerstler fought his men till ammunition was nearly exhausted; then, wounded severely himself and dreading massacre for his soldiers, he accepted terms offered by FitzGibbon and surrendered his whole force to De Haren, who had just arrived. The American officer showed courage and resource in the presence of impossible odds and did all that could have been expected in a desperate situation. He surrendered four hundred and sixty-two men, his guns and stores and ammunition. He lost seventy-four killed and wounded with sixty-four missing.

The credit of victory must go to the Indian allies of the British, who did the only fighting that day, and to FitzGibbon for his prompt and skilful action. But Canadians will never let die the name of Laura Secord, a true type and example of Canadian pioneer womanhood, who with heroic fortitude and devotion adventured her life for her country's safety and honor.

These two reverses brought to an end General Dearborn's services in the American army. He was succeeded by General Wilkinson, whose subsequent record in the war hardly appeared to justify his appointment. The American government had certainly been unfortunate so far in their selection of officers for their chief commands.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE WEEKLY TELLING

THE hospital was rife with rumors, and as ever the lie had "the legs of" the truth, with the result that gloom settled thick upon the wards, gloom that nothing would lift, not the gayest of Dr. Hector's gay reels nor the most fantastic and abandoned of "breakdowns" by Charlotte and Nora.

Said Miss Elspeth one day: "They are fretting about the war, Hector, and nothing will lift them but the truth. So you just go in to them and tell them the truth. It is bad enough, but brave men can face the truth when they know it. It is the unknown that terrifies." And thus was initiated the custom of a weekly "telling" in the wards.

"Now, my lads," the doctor began, "I am going to tell you how the tides are ebbing and flowing, the ebb as well as the flow. For you are the lads that will not be daunted with the truth. Now, you have been hearing things. What do you want to know about?"

"Tell us about the Canucks in Quebec," cried a voice.

"What is your battalion?"

"The One Hundred and Fourth, sir."

"Hoorooh!" cried an Irish voice. "The Snowshoe lads, be jabers!"

"First, then, we will go to the blue water. And there you must know that the American privateers have been having a merry time with our merchantmen and our ships of war."

"How many privateers have they?"

"Some five hundred and twenty-five ships with about forty thousand men aboard. They have captured over thirteen hundred and forty-four prizes. One of them the famous *Rossie*——"

"Ay, a Baltimore schooner, Captain Barney," growled a voice.

"You are a Bluenose, I warrant you," said the doctor.

"You bet. He's a herring jammer from Lun'berg," came a voice. There was a general laugh from all the Maritimers.

"But this Captain Barney with his schooner *Rossie* is a remarkable chap," said the doctor. "He has been known to capture eleven prizes in ten days."

"Good for the *Rossie!*"

"But what about the Bluenose boys?" asked the One Hundred and Fourth man.

"Yes, you may ask," said the doctor. "The prizes are not all on the one side. The lads from Halifax and Lunenberg with about forty-four privateers have two hundred prizes to their credit. You can work that out for yourselves."

"It's aboot twa and a half prizes 'pair' privateer for the Yanks, to fower and a half 'pair' privateer for the Maritime lads."

"Listen to him. I will wager you yon man is from Glasgow," said the doctor.

"Na, na," said the voice indignantly, "an accoontant from Aberdeen awa!"

"It cudna be warse," groaned a Clyde-side voice.

"Shut up, you fellers, and let's get on with the war," said a Canadian militiaman.

"Well, we were on the blue water," said the doctor, "and ever since the 1st of June, when the *Chesapeake* struck her flag to the *Shannon,* the tide has turned. You have heard about that engagement."

"You bet," came a chorus.

"That was the 1st of June. On the 3d Major Taylor of the One Hundredth made a little raid on Isle aux Noix down in Lake Champlain and captured two gunboats. Then, of course, coming back to ourselves, you remember how our men took Fort Schlosser across the river. And we none of us will forget the capture and destruction of Black Rock on the 11th of July."

A silence fell on the group. "He was a very fine gentleman and a gallant officer was Colonel Bisshopp. Then on August 2d we messed things at Fort Stephenson near Sandusky there."

"Then back again we go to Lake Champlain to Colonel Murray of the One Hundredth"—a great cheer rose for Colonel Murray, a very popular officer in the Niagara district—"Colonel

Murray brought off two very clever and very useful bits of work. First at Plattsburg on Lake Champlain where with nine hundred men he completely destroyed the headquarters of the eastern armies—barracks, yard, stores, armaments—and the same thing at Burlington across the lake. The importance of these two actions lies in the fact that it set back General Hampton in his preparations for his big attack on Montreal. Then back again we come to our own country here, where we suffered two very heavy disasters. The first on Lake Erie at Put-in-Bay, where that very fine young American sailor, Commodore Perry, and our Captain Barclay fought it out for the mastery of Lake Erie. Commodore Perry won."

A chorus of voices arose: "He had nine ships to our six!"

"Barclay had soldiers to sail his ships who didn't know a capstan from a bowsprit!"

"Only ten of the men handling Barclay's flagship *Detroit* were sailors!"

"Barclay's guns were played out!"

"Couldn't be fired except with pistols."

"His men were half starved and sick."

"Aw! pipe down, there! We went out to fight him, and Perry whipped us," growled a husky voice.

"Aha! You were there, eh?" asked the doctor. "Tell us about it."

"Yes, sir, I was there. Not much to tell. Perry is a good sailor and a great fighter. So is Barclay. We fought for two hours, till Barclay lay wounded on the deck—so was Perry, for that matter—and we were all shot to pieces, our guns out of commission, our ships all foul of one another. Anyway, we were beaten, and I, for one, give Perry all the credit that belongs to him."

"That's right, Treffail. He is a sailor and a fighter is Perry," said the doctor. "The disaster has shut us off Lake Erie, and it helped to bring about another disaster for us in the West. Proctor was holding on to Amherstburg. He ought to have seen at once that he could not hold Amherstburg after losing command of the lake. He had only five hundred effectives and about five hundred Indians under Tecumseh. They were all starving, and a thousand Indians, squaws, and papooses clamoring for food about the

fort. He ought to have cleared out immediately after Barclay's defeat. Instead, he waited more than three weeks and then set off with a baggage train half a mile long, and General Harrison, with three thousand fresh men, horse and foot, hard on his trail. It is one of the very saddest stories of the war, for us. Over and over again Tecumseh begged and prayed Proctor to abandon his baggage and fight. At last, indeed, I have it from Brock's runner that Tecumseh put a pistol to his head and made him stand. He must have lost his nerve completely. He made no attempt at tactics, but strung out his men in a single line. Harrison's mounted Kentucky men went through them like paper. Proctor fled and left Tecumseh with his five hundred warriors to fight it out alone. And fight it out they did, till the great Indian chief Tecumseh fell, shot through the heart. It was the red men's last great stand and Tecumseh's last great fight. A bad day for us in every way, and a day of little honor to the enemy."

"Doctor, dear man, have ye nothing but bad news for us at all, at all?" said a voice rich in the brogue of Cork.

"Wait you a minute, my lad. There will be two fine juicy bits coming to you. We will go down again to the French Canadians yonder in Lower Canada. Here's what you have. One army of seven thousand men under General Hampton away down from Lake Champlain, and another seven thousand under General Wilkinson from Sackett's Harbor arranged to meet and attack Montreal."

"Against General Hampton was sent General de Salaberry, an officer of the regular army with 'Red' George Macdonell commanding the French-Canadian select militia, as good as regulars, to back him up."

"Bejabers, an' there's a man for ye," said the Cork man, with the support of the full chorus. "Three cheers for 'Red' George!"

"You are right there, Paddy," said the doctor. "And I will be telling you more about 'Red' George and his French embodied militia. He was at Kingston with Sir George Prevost——" Immediately there rose a howl of derisive groans, curses, catcalls, at the mention of Governor Prevost's name, which lasted for some minutes, with cries of "Coward!" "Traitor!" intermingled.

"Well, we will be saying no more about him," said the doctor.

"But when he was stepping aboard his ship at Kingston, en route for Montreal, he said to 'Red' George, 'When can you leave?'

" 'After the men have had their denners, sir,' replied the Glengarry man.

" 'Then follow up as quickly as possible.'

"A day 'Red' George needed to get his bateaux together, another day he was held up by storms at the rapids, but when Prevost arrived near Montreal he found the Highlander waiting to report, 'All correct and present, sir. Not a man missing.' And this, mind you, after a two-hundred-and-ten-mile march."

Again cheers for "Red" George.

"Well, they met at the river Chateauguay. Hampton with sixty-five hundred men, De Salaberry with fifteen hundred and ninety men, of whom no more than four hundred and sixty were actually in the firing line. The Americans were green men and badly handled. They got tangled up in the woods, they fired on one another. Hampton retired, hopelessly beaten. And that was the last of Hampton and his army." Loud cheers greeted the story. "The lesson of Chateauguay is that ill-trained men, badly led, no matter how brave or how many, cannot stand against disciplined soldiers handled by forceful and trained officers."

"Where was Prevost?"

"Back near Montreal. He never saw the battlefield." Once more rose an indescribable din of howls and execrations against Canada's Governor-General.

"What happened the other army, sir?"

"Pretty much the same. General Wilkinson, though he had with him two able generals, Brown and Boyd, somehow could not handle his army, either. He never got into touch with Hampton at all. His army moved in three sections. Brown, with two thousand, reached Cornwall with Dennis—Queenstown Dennis of the Forty-ninth"—a storm of cheers greeted the name—"ay, with Queenstown Dennis hanging onto his flanks. Boyd, with two thousand, reached a spot halfway between Ogdensburg and St. Regis on the St. Lawrence. There he was met by our man Colonel Morrison in charge of a strange motley of fighters, naval bluejackets, provincial marines and voyageurs, British regulars, Canadian regulars, French and English, Canadian militia—in all

about one thousand men. At Chrystler's Farm, Boyd and Morrison fought it out. Again superior discipline won the day. Boyd retreated across the river. Brown never came into further action. Wilkinson, with his three thousand men who had never come near the battle, took his men over the river and into winter quarters. The attack upon Montreal collapsed. The lesson of Chrystler's Farm and of Chateauguay is the same lesson. Never get downhearted because of small numbers. But mind your drill, my lads, for if ever you meet with disciplined men led by men who know their business it will be a different story we will be telling."

"And what about Fort George, sir?"

"Who can say?" replied the doctor cheerfully. "I am not worrying myself."

"What about Willcocks and his raiders?" asked a militiaman.

There was deep silence for several minutes. No curses deep enough or terrible enough could be found. Then the slow, quiet voice of a Highland veteran made answer in deep reverence.

"It is myself that will be praying the Lord night and day that He will allow me to meet them once." And again there was only silence. The memory of burning farmsteads, of maimed horses and cattle, and of homeless women and children awakened in these Canadian hearts emotions too deep for the deepest execrations. The doctor left them with a word of cheer and of wholesome advice.

"Remember, lads, our great general's word at the beginning of the war—'A country defended by free men, enthusiastically devoted to the cause of their king and constitution, can never be conquered. And remember the best of their leaders, like Brown and Winfield Scott, have no sympathy with traitors like Willcocks in their burning and looting. And remember further that very many Americans have no heart for this war. Let me read you something." The doctor took from his pocket book a newspaper clipping.

"In the beginning of the year the American ship *Hornet* sank our ship *Peacock* somewhere off South America. When the Senate of Massachusetts learned of the victory this was their action:

"'Resolved, as the sense of the Senate of Massachusetts that in a war like the present waged without justifiable cause and prosecuted in a manner which indicates that conquest and ambition are its real motives, it is not becoming a moral and religious people to express approbation of military or naval exploits which are not immediately connected with the defence of our seacoast and soil.'

"That shows you what the best Americans think of the war."

CHAPTER XLVII

THE NIAGARA BURNING

THE state of matters at Fort George was anything but cheerful as winter set in. Most of the regulars and very many of the best of their militia had been drawn off to build up the armies that failed so egregiously in their campaign against Montreal. In early December the volunteers whose term of service had elapsed left for their homes by hundreds, abandoning the fort to its fate. Meantime the guerrilla warfare conducted by Dr. Cyrenius Chapin, and more especially the raids of the Canadian volunteers of the American army, became more savage and ruthless, awakening in the whole country and especially in FitzGibbon's men a deep and growing passion for vengeance.

These irregulars had little sympathy from the best of the American leaders. General Winfield Scott, when commandant at Fort George for a short time, writing Wilkinson, said:

> Chapin, who has been commissioned Lieutenant-Colonel, marched late last evening up the lake with about one hundred volunteers under his command, and was followed this morning by General McClure and General Porter with about one hundred men, Indians and militia included. There is no danger of their coming up with the enemy, or they would be in great danger of annihilation.

But though making but a slight contribution to the progress of the war operating in small parties, they could burn a homestead, destroy grain fields, mutilate cattle and horses, terrorize women and children, and make their escape, and thus keep the non-combatants in a state of anxiety and fear.

At the close of a long day's ride, as FitzGibbon and his men were entering camp, a rider dashed in on a spent and foam-flecked horse and drew up at René's side.

"Chick, what is it?' cried René, holding upright in his saddle the crippled boy.

"They're going—to burn—the house—if Hope—won't go with them!" gasped the boy.

"Who?" shouted René.

"Willcocks—Marcle—and twenty more!"

"Come on!" roared René. "The raiders! A dozen will do." He was off like the wind.

"Come on! The best horses! The best dozen of you!" yelled FitzGibbon, following René.

Five miles of a ride brought them near the Radcliffe homestead. The glare of burning buildings and stacks reddened the sky. When they reached the crossroads nearest the farm René halted the company.

"Send four men up to the farm, FitzGibbon," he said. "Let the others follow up. They are just on before us there. I saw them."

Swiftly FitzGibbon named four men for aid service at the farm.

"The rest come along! And no noise, remember!" said René. "We'll cut across here and get them on the River Road." By a well-beaten cross trail they galloped their weary horses and were at the River Road just after the raiders had crossed their line.

Out upon the road dashed René and FitzGibbon together.

"Come back and fight, Willcocks!" shouted FitzGibbon. "There are only eight of us. Come back! Let's see what you are made of!" Meantime René, calling to Gypsy, guiding by his knees, two pistols in his hands, was closing swiftly on the raiders.

Willcocks, splendidly mounted upon a horse comparatively fresh, glancing over his shoulders, caught sight of this threatening doom bearing down upon him. Giving spurs to his horse and shouting, "The fort! The fort!" he was away like the wind, followed by Marcle, equally well mounted.

"Oh, God! For a little more speed!" groaned René. "They are leaving us. We can't get him. Well, we'll get these fellows, at any rate." Twice his guns spoke; two men tumbled headlong from their saddles. The rest, spurring and lashing, gradually drew away from their pursuers.

"We can't make it, me bhoy!" said FitzGibbon.

"There's a quarter of a mile yet, sir," said McCloy, who, mounted on one of Mr. Robert Hamilton's splendid blacks, was up in line with the leaders. "An' the gate is open—we might take a turn about the parade ground."

"Hoorooh, for it, then, me bhoy!" shouted the daredevil Irishman, swinging loose his saber. At the fort gate the railers were forced to draw rein, thus creating some confusion. Hard on them came the three, René leading, pistols in hand—two shots yet, he had—and close behind him and side by side McCloy and FitzGibbon, swinging sabers.

"Stand, Willcocks, you coward!" yelled René, dashing through the sentries at the gate. The parade ground, half full of men, lounging about, was immediately in wild confusion.

"Mind the gate, McCloy!" shouted FitzGibbon.

"Mind it yersel! I'm engaged the noo," grunted McCloy, pressing hard upon René's heels. Like three demonized madmen the three swept round the parade ground upon the heels of the raiders, who, taking cover behind stables and sheds, were soon lost to sight.

On every side from the astonished Americans cries arose: "Shoot them! Kill the devils! The gate! Shut the gate!" But the remaining five of FitzGibbon's men were at the gate and holding it.

"Out! Out!" cried FitzGibbon, making for a company of soldiers seeking to close the gate.

But René, swinging his mare about, cantered slowly round the square crying, "Will none of those cursed cowards come out and fight?"

"Ay! where's yon skunk? Will he no come oot o' his barrow?" cried McCloy, following his leader.

"Come back here, you fools!" cried FitzGibbon. Galloping with two or three of his men after René, he caught his bridle rein and dashed for the gate held by two of his troopers. At the gate McCloy turned and, shaking his saber at the parade ground, shouted, "Come oot ye muckle gowks. Come hither tae me an' hae a wee collie-shoggie! Will ye no?" A rifle cracked, carrying away

his cap. "Think shame till ye, ye cheepie peepin' puddocks. Why——"

"Saints and devils, McCloy!" cried FitzGibbon wrathfully, snatching his bridle rein, "come out of this."

There was no pursuit. FitzGibbon's scouts, untouched, unfollowed, rode slowly back to the Radcliffe farm.

The fire had made a clean sweep. House and barns were heaps of smouldering logs, grain stacks black ashes, orchards and gardens charred ruins. About the smouldering heaps were gathered a large number of neighbors, women and old men and boys. As the scouts rode up an old man of about seventy, with a boy of twelve, approached René.

"A bit of hell, eh, René?" he said in a voice that shook.

"Where are the family?" inquired René.

"Mr. Hubert took 'em all home. The old lady is in a very bad way. But, say, can't something be done?"

René shook his head.

"Look-a-here. It looks as if it's 'bout time us boys joined up. Sol and me has made up our minds. He's goin' to join an' he says he'll take me along." He grinned with toothless gums.

"But your home folks, Mr. Decks?" said René.

"Looks as if they ain't much else we kin do with this agoin' on," replied the old man, sweeping his hand toward the ruins. About them gathered a number of the neighbors.

"I'm goin' to join, anyhow," said the boy in a voice of fury. "I want to kill them devils."

"It's the only thing," said a woman's voice. "Will they take us too, René?"

"You've given your men already, Mrs. Ives," replied René, deeply moved.

"Yes, they're all joined up, all four of 'em," said Mrs. Ives. "There's two of 'em left, twelve and fourteen. But we must do somethin' agin those raiders. I'm American born—but——"

"Them ain't no Americans. That there Willcocks ain't no American," cried an American woman's shrill voice. "They're just plain polecats. We all orter join up agin them."

"We will, Mrs. Ives," said Mr. Decks. "I'm a good Methody, but, by gum, I believe the good Lord hain't got no place for them

devils but hell, and I want to send a few of 'em where they belong. That's the kind of Methody I am."

"A-a-a-men, brother. Here's another," chanted a devout voice.

"Mr. Decks, you do me good!" said FitzGibbon. "Get all the names of men and boys you can who will offer for service. We will find work for you."

"I'll take 'em down," said Mrs. Ives.

As FitzGibbon and his men rode down the lane he said to René:

"This fire has kindled other fires that water can't put out, René, me bhoy."

Before a week had passed, from the Brookes Manor House they carried Mrs. Radcliffe to the graveyard of the little Methodist meeting house on the St. David's road. From far and near people gathered, old folks, women, and children. Their men were at the war. The heart of the community was shocked at the cold-blooded cruelty of the outrage. There was besides a deep tide of sympathy and love toward the children who had stood firm in spite of the father's disloyalty and the threats of the enemy. There being no minister in charge of the Methodist congregation, the service was conducted by Christian Warner, the presiding steward, greatly loved and respected for his sterling character and blameless life. At the close of the simple service a beautiful thing took place. During the singing of the final hymn the Reverend Mr. Addison, the greatly loved Rector of St. Mark's, who was present in the congregation, walked up to the desk and spoke to Mr. Warner, who announced, "The Reverend Mr. Addison has a word for us." In a few words of beautiful simplicity the rector spoke of the kindly Christian virtues of the dead. And then, without bitterness, he referred to the terrible thing that had been done, as not an act of war, and as repugnant he was sure to the sentiments of those who were now their enemies. He commended the family, these brave and loyal children, to the loving care of the community and to the grace and mercy of the Heavenly Father. The whole company, men, women, and children, were shaken with sobs and weeping.

Then old Colonel Brookes, his face deeply lined and his hair whitened with the strains of war, spoke a few words of thanks

on behalf of the children to Mr. Addison and to the friends assembled. As for the children, his home would be their home, where they would find such tender care as his wife and family could give. Meantime the war must go on. And such outrages must be sternly suppressed. On that note of tenderness and of high reserve the people sadly but with faces set for endurance wended their way homeward through the fading light of the short winter day.

The events of the succeeding weeks proved that the horrors of these outrages only aroused in the minds of the people of Canada a sterner determination to prosecute the war to the bitter end, their sufferings only serving to knit their hearts in firmer bonds of patriotic devotion. The diminishing forces of the Canadian army received large reinforcements of old men and boys who were employed to release able-bodied men for the firing line.

Toward the close of the year there were important changes in the Canadian high command. In November, General Vincent, owing to illness, was forced to retire and was succeeded by Major General Riall. Sir Gordon Drummond succeeded De Rottenburg as Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada and commander-in-chief of the forces, and, to the joy of all, Colonel Murray of the One Hundredth was brought back again from the Champlain Valley to the Niagara Peninsula.

Under the command of General Gordon Drummond the war took on a different aspect.

Immediately the lines of investment about Fort George began to tighten. Colonel Murray advanced his line to Twelve Mile Creek. The garrison in Fort George had grown woefully weak. General McClure became distracted. His appeals for help went unanswered. The raiders under Willcocks and Chapin were often chased back to the very gate of the fort. McClure called a council of war. With the exception of Colonel Willcocks, Captain Marcle, and Colonel Chapin, the vote stood for immediate evacuation. Willcocks was enraged, but McClure was resolved.

"Those men can ride in on us at any moment they wish," he said. "They are perfect devils. And it is your raiding that has

done it, Willcocks. If they break in here they will bayonet every man jack of us. You, Willcocks, they will hang."

"Then follow up your instructions and burn out this devil's nest about us here," said Willcocks.

"What do you mean?"

"Read your orders from the Secretary of War."

McClure turned over his files.

"Here it is:

"SIR:

"Understanding that the defence of the post committed to your charge may render it proper to destroy the town of Newark, you are hereby directed to apprise its inhabitants of this and to invite them to remove themselves and their effects to some place of greater safety.

"That is not exactly an order to burn up this town, seeing that they are pulling out," said McClure.

"It is near enough. You don't want to leave these houses, shops, stores, and all that for the enemy's comfort. War is war, say I. Give me an order and I shall do it with the greatest pleasure."

His savage counsel prevailed over the weakness of a cowardly heart.

On the afternoon of the 10th December, 1813, the inhabitants of the town received an order to evacuate all dwellings, stores, and shops, preparatory to their destruction by fire. Some few took warning and attempted to remove their goods and chattels. For the most part the order was ignored.

"Leave my house and all my pretty things? And Hector's books and all? That will I not!" cried Miss Elspeth indignantly. "And besides, look at all these poor creatures: The sick! The children! Mrs. McNiven with her babe a day old! Mrs. Jessop and her baby ready to come any moment! Not I! Let them burn me out! Never you fear, they will never be allowed to do such a thing whatever."

Four hours later, as evening drew on, in the midst of a raging blizzard a platoon of raiders and militia, half drunk, sent out by General McClure and led by Colonel Willcocks and other officers, began at the water's edge and systematically went through

the town, carrying the torch of destruction. Private dwellings, hotels, halls, stores, churches, school, library, all were given to the flames. Ruthless, the ruffian soldiery did their work, driving before them old men, cripples, the sick, women with babes in their arms and children crying at their skirts, women great with child; all were turned out into the raging blizzard.

Marshaling this harried and stricken company Miss Elspeth, like a miniature sergeant major, led the way to a large root house where some fifty of the sick and weakly were housed. The rest stumbled on along the country roads till they were met by their horror-stricken neighbors and taken to shelter.

Half frozen, with Mrs. McNiven's babe in her arms and with Mrs. McNiven herself shepherding and supporting Mrs. Jessop, almost in her pangs, Miss Elspeth, fainting but indomitable, was met by the Brookes' sleigh, full of blankets and straw, driven by Charlotte. It was well on into the night before all were safely housed from the storm. That night Mrs. Jessop was delivered of a son motherless from his birth.

Two days of mild suffering for Miss Elspeth, and then the end. On the afternoon of the third day her brother stood smiling down upon her with very tender and very quiet eyes.

"You will be seeing the end of me very soon, Hector," his sister said faintly. He knew well it was vain to deceive her.

"You are a brave woman, Elspeth," he said, still smiling.

"Hector, you will bring Billy Badger to me and the lad—lad."

"They are here, Elspeth, but they are unwilling to tire you. They are waiting. You will find it trying, Elspeth."

"Trying?" She lifted an eyebrow in disdain. An old trick of hers.

"First Billy and last the lad—my lad." The indescribable tenderness of her voice in the last two words was like a caress. The doctor touched her wrist.

"Huh! No fears for me!" she whispered, scornful of his solicitude.

Billy Badger came into the room with the look that he carried when he went forward to the Holy Communion, a look of rever-

ence touched with ecstasy. Walking softly on his toes, he came to the bedside and knelt without a word.

Miss Elspeth put out her hand, thin, daintily transparent. Billy took it in both his as if it had been the Holy Bread and touched it with his lips. Behind him stood the doctor.

"I am away, Billy. But I could not be content before I would be telling you what you have done for me."

Billy shook his head, gazing at her in dumb grief.

"What no man nor minister could do, what his mother could not do for him, you have done, Billy. You brought him the salvation of the Lord." Billy's face dropped to the bed. "And when I see His own dear face I will be telling Him, Billy!" The voice grew eager. "When I am away you will not be letting him go? You will not, Billy?"

Billy lifted his head.

"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved," he quoted simply, his eyes alight.

"Ay! That is the word. Why should I be feared? I am not feared for you, Hector, my man," she said, glancing at him proudly. "The Lord will not forget all your love and your faithfulness, Billy. I will be telling Him, Billy, but I cannot tell Him all of it. Och! But He knows it Himself. You will be going now, Billy." He tried to speak, choked, tried again. His words came brokenly.

"Oh! Miss Elspeth! Miss Elspeth! I can't say it!" Once more reverently he put his lips upon her hand, looked long upon her face. A gush of tears came from his eyes. Then, shaking his head he went voiceless from the room.

Miss Elspeth lay quiet with eyes closed. Two tears stole down the little white face.

"You are tired, Elspeth, too tired to——"

"Too tired? To see the lad, my laddie?" She smiled her disdain.

Dr. Hector went to bring René in.

"It will not be long now, René. She tires easily," the doctor said.

"I will remember," said the boy, with a deep breath. "Wait a bit." He stood at a window looking out over the snow-laden

bushes, brilliant in the glow of the setting sun. "It will be to-night, Doctor," he said.

"To-night, I think. She has little strength."

"I am ready," he said and went in.

Miss Elspeth greeted him with a smile tremulously gay. Both hands she lifted high in welcome.

"You are come, laddie! You are in time. I knew it. They told me you were far away. But I knew. I knew." She gave a little nod of triumph.

"They sent me word, Miss Elspeth." He did not say he had run a hundred miles through enemy country since the same hour the previous day, every mile fraught with danger.

"Ay, you are the lad to depend on. Come near to me here. Close, close! You will let me speak—without tears—no tears. It will be three years since first you came to me—I remember the day. You came right into my heart. I would often be wanting a bairn of my own—then you came—my bairnie—my bairnie. You came as God's gift to me—and you have brought me joy, only joy! And what joy! And now you will lift me in your arms and carry me to the window. You are so strong—ay, but you are the man!"

René glanced at the doctor, who nodded his permission.

He gathered up the tiny form with her blanket and carried her easily and lightly to the window. Like a tired child she snuggled down into his arms. "Many's the day I wanted this," she said with a quick shy look at him, "but I did not like to ask. Ah-h-h, but this is like Heaven itself!" From the setting sun there lay on the white snow bars of gold and of variegated colors from crimson to faintest pink.

"Love and light, René," she whispered, smiling up at him. "That is Heaven—just that."

He smiled brightly back at her, but without speech.

"Hector!" He came and sat beside her. She put out her hand to him. She shook her head at him with a little rebuking smile. "Ah! You have cost me many a tear, but you were worth every tear. I wouldn't have been without one of them."

They sat silent amid the fading colors of the dying sun, while she slept, breathing gently like an infant. Suddenly from the

afterglow there flamed up a flood of warm color in the sky. Her opening eyes caught the warm light.

"Oh! Is it the morning, René?" Her voice rang out happily. "Oh, René!" Her hand stole up about his neck. "Kiss me, laddie. Yes, yes, it is the morning." Her face nestled into René's breast, she breathed a deep sigh and was still. She had passed into the land where night is no more, nor pain, nor crying, but where it is forever peace.

That night Colonel Murray marched into Fort George, surveyed the ghastly ruins, listened with set face to the tales poured into his ears by his old neighbors and friends, and made his plans for vengeance.

Throughout the whole peninsula, and very especially among the soldiers, there burned hot fires of vengeance seeking retribution. Gordon Drummond was not the man to rest quietly under such an act of wanton cruelty. Colonel Murray submitted his plan. Drummond approved, and immediately events were set in motion.

Acting under immediate orders, Colonel Elliott, securing the aid of FitzGibbon and his scouts, brought overland on sleds bateaux from Burlington.

On the night of the 18th Colonel Murray with the One Hundredth Regiment and detachments of the Forty-first, the Royals with a few of the Royal Artillery, some five hundred and fifty in all, crossed the river. They landed at Youngstown, two miles up the river from Fort Niagara, where lay a detachment from the garrison on outpost duty. In swift and terrible silence—not a loaded musket among them—the dreadful business was dispatched. The outposts and sentries were bayonetted to a man. Arrived at the fort, the attacking party waited in the dark at the main gate for the changing of the guard. On the opening of the gate the relief passed out. They were met with the deadly bayonet thrust, swift and silent. Through the gate the men of the One Hundredth rushed, followed by the whole party. The surprised Americans made what resistance they could.

It was vain. In half an hour the work was over. The fort, strongly built of stone, with twenty-seven mounted guns, defended by more than three hundred men, fully equipped, whose commandant, Captain Leonard, had been warned of the possible

attack, was captured at the expense of a loss to the British of six killed and five wounded. An enormous quantity of arms, equipment, and stores, to the value of nearly a million dollars, was secured. The moral effect was tremendous. The fort, a post of immense strategic importance and constituting an effective salient into the enemy country, was held by the British to the end of the war.

The same day General Riall, who had landed near Lewiston with a force of fourteen hundred, of whom four hundred were Indians, proceeded along the Niagara River toward Lewiston. In ten days the whole frontier from Fort Niagara to Buffalo was a blackened desolation. Such was the retribution exacted for Niagara.

CHAPTER XLVIII

"I MUST NOT WEEP"

THE situation on the Niagara front was full of grave anxiety for Gordon Drummond. The winter and spring of 1813–1814 had witnessed no military activities on either side of the river, but there were rumors of preparation for great events on the American side. On the 20th of May an important council of war was called to meet at Fort George. General Drummond, General Riall, with Colonel Murray and the officers of the district, had been brought together.

"It seems very difficult to obtain news from the other side," remarked the commander-in-chief. "The sources of information seem to have almost wholly dried up."

"I expect we shall get something worth while from that scout of ours," said Colonel Murray, "when he comes."

"You have nothing further to offer, General Riall?" asked Drummond.

"No, we seem to be considerably in the dark as to the movements of the enemy."

As they were discussing their plans an orderly came in. "The runner has arrived, sir," he announced.

"Then let us have him in," said the general. And René entered.

"We are waiting for some new and much needed information, René," said Drummond. "We expect something worth while from Brock's runner."

"There is certainly a new world over there across the river, sir," replied René. "There is a new army. In the first place it is almost impossible to get past its sentries. No visitors, no loafers, no hangers-on, no Indians."

"No chance for an honest scout, eh, René?" inquired Colonel Murray.

"It is almost impossible," replied René, "to get into that camp.

General Winfield Scott has created a new army, new in discipline, new in tactics, new in spirit, new in physical condition. I saw a battalion come back from a ten-mile march fresh as paint and stepping high. They are still slovenly at their manual and sloppy in their parade ground evolutions, but I saw five hundred of them go through two miles of bush in half an hour and keep their line. They move with speed and with precision. I saw six hundred practise an embarkation. They had thirty boats, three lined up at the dock at one time and twenty men to a boat. They embarked six hundred in less than ten minutes."

"Ten minutes?" exclaimed the general. "Impossible!"

"Ten minutes, sir! It was amazing."

"Amazing truly after what we have seen of their embarkations hitherto," said FitzGibbon.

"Their target practice is excellent, and their field work, well, I consider it superb."

"What do you mean exactly there?" inquired Drummond.

"I mean, sir," said René, with some hesitation, "that in making approach to the enemy they have learned to take cover with extraordinary skill. Every tree, stump, hillock, stone is made use of. They move forward by quick rushes and then disappear. I consider they have adopted very effective tactics. I hope you will excuse my saying so. I know that it is not my business, but I felt you ought to know."

"Very good, very good," replied General Drummond. "It is something we may be forced to consider. Go on."

"The health of the army is very good. Not a sick man in the hospital, and the morale is high. They are keen to wash out the disgrace that has fallen upon their troops during the past two years."

"How many men in that army?" inquired the general.

"It is difficult to say, sir. Between four and five thousand regulars, besides about one thousand militia and eight hundred Indians under General Porter."

"Well, we may ignore Porter," said FitzGibbon with a laugh.

"I wouldn't be too sure," replied René. "The spirit of the regular army is making itself felt in the militia."

"Were you able to learn anything of their plans?"

"Nothing definite, sir. The general impression seems to be that the movement will be Erie, Queenstown, Niagara, Burlington, the fleet coöperating at Niagara. Or a cross country expedition from Erie straight to Burlington, the fleet coöperating at Burlington."

"Aha!" exclaimed Drummond. "I fancy Yeo will have something to say about that. Have you anything further to offer?"

"This is my full report, sir," replied René, laying down a paper upon the table.

"Nothing further to add? No suggestion to make?"

"Only this, sir. He seems to hold a double advantage over us in addition to superiority of numbers and of equipment. First his army is massed into a single striking unit. Second, he appears to have the initiative. That is all, sir, I think."

"And very good too, showing close and careful observation and at every point thoroughly sound judgment. In regard to your last two suggestions I venture to say, first, that while he has a single striking force it is not impossible that we may succeed in breaking that unit up."

"Very true, sir," replied Riall. "We have two sides of the river to operate on, as well as he."

"And secondly," continued Drummond, "in the matter of initiative we may have something to say about that as well, and one further and very important observation I would make, and it is this, that we have what General Brown has failed to secure, namely, a very sympathetic and effective liaison with the fleet."

"Gentlemen, I expect we shall see some very real fighting during the next few weeks. Fighting that will test us to the limit. But while I have every respect for our scout's judgment, I am not so profoundly impressed with General Winfield Scott's ability as a maker of armies. The very serious defect in any army that he can produce is the lack of experience. Armies are not made on parade grounds, but on battlefields."

"Hear! Hear! Right you are, sir," came from the officers assembled.

"None the less, however," continued the general, "we must be on the alert. Our recruits are coming in slowly but still coming

in, and they are being fast hammered into shape under the excellent discipline of Colonel Brookes."

"This last outrage of McArthur's cavalry upon the Talbot settlement ought to stir things up a bit," said FitzGibbon.

"Gentlemen, this introduces a subject upon which I wish to make a statement, the subject, namely, of retaliation as practised by our army. In no case is retaliation carried out simply as a policy of revenge or retribution, but simply and solely as a policy of prevention of barbarous usages in war. Let me invite your attention to the following facts.

"Last April you will remember that York, the capital city of this province, was burned, whether of deliberate purpose, or because of lack of discipline in the troops, matters not. That action has not yet been repudiated by the American government. Last autumn there was a succession of raids accompanied by burnings and wanton destruction of private property throughout this country. In December the town of Niagara was utterly destroyed and four hundred old men, women, and children turned out of their homes at four hours' notice into a December storm. In regard to that atrocity I wrote, on December 14th, as follows:

"SIR:

"Lieutenant General Drummond, President and commanding the forces in Upper Canada, having just received a report from the officer in command of the British troops on the Niagara frontier that the whole of the town of Niagara was destroyed by fire previous to its being evacuated by the American troops, I am directed to call upon you immediately and distinctly to state whether this atrocious act has been committed by the authority of the American government or is the unauthorized act of any individual. It is essential that not a moment should be lost in returning a specific answer to this communication.

"To this communication I received no reply. On the night of the 18th of December our troops captured Fort Niagara. This was an act of war, not of retaliation, and immediately afterward we proceeded to capture and destroy the forts and villages between Fort Niagara and Buffalo. This was partly from military

necessity but also as an act of retaliation and warning against such barbarities as the destruction of the town of Niagara.

"On the 12th of January of this year Governor-General Sir George Prevost issued a proclamation, from which the following is extracted:

". . . Lamenting as His Excellency does the necessity imposed upon him of retaliating upon the subjects of America the miseries inflicted upon the inhabitants of Newark, it is not his intention to pursue further a system of warfare so revolting to his own feelings and so little congenial to the British character unless the future measures of the enemy compel him again to resort to it.

"On the 28th of January of this year I received the following delayed answer to my letter from General Wilkinson by direction of the President:

Plattsburg, January 28th, 1814.

"SIR:

"I am commanded by the Executive of the United States to disavow the conduct of the Brigadier-General McClure of the militia of the State of New York in burning the town of Newark and, in irrefragable testimony that this act was unlicensed, to transmit to Your Excellency a copy of the order, under color of which that officer perpetrated a deed abhorrent to every American feeling. . . .

"No system of retaliation which has for its object the devastation of private property will ever be resorted to by the American government but in the last extremity, and this will depend on the conduct of your royal master's troops in this country.

"In spite of this assurance these wanton acts of barbarity have continued. On the 14th of this month a detachment of eight hundred Americans, regulars, with militia and seamen under the command of Colonel J. B. Campbell of the Eleventh United States Infantry, deliberately destroyed the village of Dover and with it flour mills, saw mills, distilleries, as well as dwelling houses and barns, slaughtering cattle, horses, etc., belonging to the inhabitants. General Riall demanded an explanation from Colonel Campbell. No answer has yet been received. Then there follows this recent outrage on the Talbot settlement by Colonel McArthur's cavalry.

"I need not assure you that this kind of warfare is repugnant not only to our government, but also to every officer serving in His Majesty's Army or Navy. I regret to say that I am convinced that further retaliation will be necessary to put an end to these atrocities."

At the close of the council, which lasted some hours, the general, in dismissing his officers, rose to his feet and uttered a final word.

"We have been thoroughly well served to-day by our young runner here. Information of this sort is the kind of information we need to deal intelligently with the grave situation confronting us. But I beg to remind you of two extremely influential facts: First, Napoleon has gone to Elba, and secondly, the great blockade of the American coast by the British fleet is becoming effective. These two facts should not be forgotten.

"I believe we may expect action by the enemy within a very few weeks. Let us continue to be alert, active, untiring in our discipline and in our vigilance, believing in the righteousness of our cause and ultimate success of our arms."

Sooner than expected, on the 3d day of July Winfield Scott's new-made American army of forty-five hundred men under the leadership of General Jacob Brown, with Scott and Ripley as his brigadiers, crossed over from Black Rock and invested Fort Erie. This point, a mere earthwork, with a tiny garrison of one hundred and fifty men, at once surrendered, and the American army on the following day proceeded on its march of conquest along the Niagara River. As it approached Chippewa it was met at Street's Creek by General Riall with a force of fourteen hundred regulars and six hundred militia and Indians. At the first charge of the Canadian militia the American militia broke and fled.

"Ha-ha! The old tricks!" cried the victors, and pushed on. Pushed on hard and fast till they came upon something that would not give—steel—tempered steel—tempered steel and wielded with a master's skill.

"Ha-ha! Something new here! But nothing very serious! Push on!"

General Brown, stubborn, solid, painstaking, has planned

wisely. Winfield Scott, brilliant in strategy, Ripley cautious and steady, are vigorously executing. It is a fierce fight. Both forces handled with skill and both determined to win. Towson, of Queenstown fame, handles his guns with deadly effectiveness. Two hours' fighting and the British force, overlapped, surprised, disillusioned, beaten, steadily retire, cross the river to Chippewa, barely save their guns by an act of great gallantry on the part of a young officer of the mounted militia, Captain Hubert Brookes, blow up the bridge, and by the skin of their teeth make good their escape. They have learned a new lesson in this war. Never again will they make the fatal error of underestimating the enemy. A casualty list of five hundred, one fourth of their total strength as against a casualty list of four hundred, one tenth of the enemy strength, rubs this lesson in. A new day has dawned for the American Army of the Centre. For the first time in this war the American regulars may march with head erect. They have won a decided victory over British regulars led by first-class British officers. The war has entered upon a new phase in the Niagara Peninsula.

The harvesting of the dead is a pitiful operation. Over the field where half an hour ago men in vivid life moved strenuously, exultantly, defiantly, now lie forms of men torn, crumpled, inert, passionless as the clod to which they are even now returned.

"It was a gallant charge!" said FitzGibbon, his hand on René's shoulder. "He saved the guns. Ripley, slow as he was, might have turned the flank but for those precious moments gained."

Over his dead friend's face René's tears were falling.

"The general says I may take him home. How can I bring him home?" he said. "How can I, Eustace?"

"Where is Edward?" inquired Eustace.

"Wounded but still with the guns. He can't be spared. Poor boy! His brother saved him too. He waited a bit long," said René. "Can't you come, Eustace? It would make it easier for Charlotte —and for Hope too. God help her, poor girl!"

"I shall see what I can do," said Eustace.

Through the serene moonlit July night the wagon made its slow, lumbering way over the rough trail that took the shortest route between Chippewa and the Brookes Manor House.

"You ride on, Eustace. I shall bring him with me."

"Oh, I say! Don't you think—eh, what?"

"He was my friend, Eustace. I hate to leave him. You tell his father first, then his mother and Charlotte. Leave Hope to me."

"My God, René! How can I! What shall I say?"

"What indeed?"

The family were found in the garden, enjoying the cool night air. The capacity for grief in the human soul is the measure of power to endure. With the dignity of the truly great they received their dead son.

Only one bitter word the old colonel spoke.

"If only I had not sent him away."

"True, my dear, but think how he came back to give himself for his country," said his wife gently. "We should not forget that."

"Yes, yes, Mother," replied the colonel. "You were right then and you are right now. We must not grudge our boy," said the old soldier, straightening his back. "But God be merciful to me! Here is the poor girl. Who will speak to her?"

"I will, sir," replied René, and went to meet her. He led Hope into the shadow of the hedge. The others waited with agonized hearts for a cry of lamentation. But cry there was none. Holding her close in his arms, René told her. It was a story of a very gallant action he had to tell.

"We were beaten and in retreat and being outflanked. Edward —a great gunner he has become—was covering our retreat. He held a bit too long. It looked as if nothing could save him and his guns. Hubert—he had just got his captaincy in the Dragoons—Hubert saw the danger.

" 'Men, we must save the guns!' he said, and led them straight at a thousand men. Not many came back, but the enemy advance was checked—the guns were saved—Edward too—and perhaps the army."

She listened with white face and shining eyes.

"Thank God, I had him all my own for a little while. I must not weep, René," she breathed, looking up to the stars and into the face of God.

CHAPTER XLIX

THE RAIDERS' FINISH

For a month following Chippewa there were no major operations of troops. But the American Canadian Volunteers continued to terrorize the country. FitzGibbon once and again attempted to run them down, but they were well mounted and undoubtedly they had many friends in the country. The exigencies of the main Canadian service prevented any serious attempt to deal with these bandits and marauders.

One day came to René information of a projected raid which appeared to offer opportunity for a trap. He went hotfoot to his chief.

"I want fifty men for the raiders," he announced.

"Hush! Don't let the general hear you, or you will meet with trouble. He is scraping the country to the bone for men," replied FitzGibbon.

"But listen to my plan," pleaded René, and he set forth its details.

"Sounds good. But fifty men! Dear soul! Not for one instant would Riall weaken Chippewa by fifty men. Any moment he may be attacked."

"Give me twenty-five, then. I'll pick up some boys from Colonel Brookes's recruits. They'll jump at the chance."

"Come with me, then. But you may expect to get what Paddy gave the drum."

They found the general studying a map and apparently annoyed.

"Why can't we get details on these maps?" he exclaimed. "Look at this—vague—open spaces—no trails. What do you want, FitzGibbon?"

René made his plea.

"Impossible just now! I expect an attack any hour. What about this country beyond Street's Creek?"

René looked at the map. It was as the general said, exceedingly empty and vague.

René took a pencil and went to work upon the map, filling in woods, trails, streams, creeks, and describing the physical features as he worked.

"Aha! Now that's something like a map," said the general. "That wood looks to me like a protection for our right flank."

"Yes—or a menace!" said René. "I mean there are trails which could be easily widened. Winfield Scott's men would find no difficulty with them."

"Rather unlikely," said Riall. "But what were you after? Twenty-five men? To capture these raiders? After all, are they anything more than a mere annoyance? Unpleasant, I admit, but anything more?"

"They hurt recruiting. When a man joins up his barn is burned. They demoralize the militia. All its officers are suffering in their homes. Unchecked, they give the impression that we are being beaten."

The general pondered.

"You make a case. Give him the men, FitzGibbon. These devils must be checked."

René rode away jubilant with his men, straight to Colonel Brookes, whom he found drilling his recruits.

"I want twenty-five of your best, Colonel Brookes."

"Look at them!" said the colonel wrathfully. "Children and cripples."

A laugh ran down the line. They knew and loved the colonel, though his tongue had a rough edge to it.

"They can ride?"

"Oh, they can hang on to a horse," acknowledged the colonel.

"And they can shoot?"

"They can hit the barn door there at fifty paces."

Again a laugh ran along the line. Every man and boy could pick a black squirrel out of a pine.

"What's the job?" said the colonel.

"It may be dangerous," said René.

"Dangerous?" said the colonel, looking over his line. His men looked quietly back at him. There were smiles still on their faces.

"The raiders!" said René.

"Raiders!" said the colonel, his voice low but distinctly audible.

Along the line hands tightened on the bridle rein. There were smiles no longer.

"For active service!" the colonel's voice rang out. "Volunteers to the front! March!" As if shot from a bow the line of horses leaped forward.

"Give me the boys, the youngsters, Colonel," said René in a low voice.

Together they rode along the eager line, the colonel calling out names as he rode, and René had his men.

A day and a night and the scouts came to a place where from the main road a trail led across country through a wood and out by a lane. The lane ran between fences constructed of uprooted pine stumps six to eight feet high, scraggy, impenetrable. A hundred yards from the woods they moved the stumps inward and completely blocked the lane. Around this trap René disposed his men and waited. It was a night of half moon but with brilliant stars. One could see a man's face at fifty yards. Light enough. Calling his men about him he gave them final instructions, telling them off into firing squads. Then he made a boy of sixteen repeat the orders till they all had them perfect, "and my last word is Shoot when you are told but not till you are told."

Along the fences and behind the barrier he placed thirty-five of his men under Billy Badger, his lieutenant, the stump roots offering loopholes and perfect cover. He, with the remaining scouts, waited at the woods. In due time they could hear the raiders coming, vociferous and jubilant over the success of their raid, the sky behind them red over the treetops with the reflection of burning barns and stacks.

"The last you will burn in this country, please God," said Billy Badger to his men.

"Will we hang them right now, what's left of them?" asked a boy eagerly.

"Shut your trap!" said Billy. "Who asked you anything?"

"They burned our house, anyway," said the boy with sullen ferocity. "I'd like to pull the rope."

"Shut up, you! Now, not a word, not a move till you're ordered. Remember that."

Out of the woods and into the trap rode the raiders some seventy-five strong, their tongues thick, and their boisterous voices giving proof that in their raid they had tapped some whisky kegs.

At the barrier a voice rang out: "Halt!" Startled, they halted, subdued into silence.

"Who are you?" inquired their leader.

"You are covered! Don't move!" came the voice. Meantime, some yards in the rear nearer the woods, the pine stumps from the fence on either side moved into the lane blocking it completely.

Huddled together, talking in hurried confused voices, the raiders waited developments. From their rear came a word of command.

"Drop your guns on the ground!" No one moved.

Again came the voice: "Your lives depend on your obeying orders."

"Who are you? What authority——" again demanded the raider leader.

"Drop your guns on the ground!" Still no move.

"Number one squad! Take the first three! Fire!"

Three men dropped from their saddles.

"Drop your rifles!" A few rifles clattered to the ground. "Number two squad! The next three!"

"Hold on, for God's sake!" cried the leader, flinging his rifle to the ground. "Tell us who——"

"Once more! Drop your rifles on the ground! Number two squad——"

Crash! The remainder of the seventy-five rifles fell to the ground.

"You saved three men that time! Next time disobedience will mean death!" The voice sounded inexorable as doom.

"Line up along the fence on each side facing inwards! March!"

The raiders, hurrying to obey, scrambled to their places with

the exception of one man, whose courage had been unduly fortified by his potations. He rode up the middle of the lane condemning his unseen enemies to eternal torments.

"Number two squad, take that man! Fire!"

The man tumbled like a sack of old clothes to the ground.

"Anyone else want to try?" The voice was coolly sarcastic.

"Squads number two and three pass out the rifles!" In a few minutes the raiders' rifles, passed out through the loopholes in the stumps, were in the hands of their foes.

"Willcocks! Forward!"

"He is not here!" answered a raider.

"Don't lie to me!" replied the voice, stern and sharp.

"It is God's truth! Come and see! Willcocks, Marcle, and Mallory were called to headquarters yesterday."

Deep oaths and curses broke from the scouts. It was a bitter disappointment.

Tied to their horses and tied in groups of three to their captors' horses, they rode all night and all day and by evening of next day were delivered to headquarters at Burlington, weary, broken spirited, fear smitten, to await their doom.

The first verdict condemned fifteen of their leaders to be hanged and the remainder fifty-five to be shot. The legal authorities at York intervened. Long and vehement was the controversy, with the result that the fifteen were condemned to be hanged, the others gave guarantees of loyalty and were sent home. Finally, of the fifteen condemned seven were hanged, the remaining eight banished the country. That was the end of the raiding by the Canadian Volunteers.

CHAPTER L

LUNDY'S LANE

THE battle of Chippewa put the finishing touches on the army that Winfield Scott had hammered into an effective fighting machine. They came out of that battle with a new sense of invincibility. They had visions of a sweeping march of triumph from Chippewa to Burlington by way of Fort George and thence to Kingston, provided they could secure the coöperation of Admiral Chauncey's fleet. Had they been able to effect this, Canadian history might have been different.

General Brown's letter to the Secretary of War sounded this note of high triumph.

Headquarters, Chippewa Plains,
July 6th, 1814.

DEAR SIR:

. . . I will advance, not doubting but the gallant and accomplished soldiers I have the honor to command will break down all opposition to the shores of Ontario north of Fort George, where if Commodore Chauncey can meet us, it is well.

He was doomed to disappointment. Not even the Secretary of War could command the movements of the admiral.

On the 13th of July the general wrote a frenzied letter to Admiral Chauncey in these terms:

. . . Meet me on the lake shore north of Fort George with your fleet and we will be able, I have no doubt, to settle a plan of operations that will break the power of the enemy in Upper Canada, and that in the course of a short time. At all events, let me hear from you. I have looked for your fleet with the greatest of anxiety since the 10th. I do not doubt my ability to meet the enemy in the field and to march to

any direction over his country—your fleet carrying the necessary supplies. We can threaten Fort George and Niagara, carry Burlington Heights and York, and proceed direct to Kingston and carry that place. For God's sake let me see you. . . . There is not a doubt resting in my mind that we have between us the command of sufficient means to conquer Upper Canada within two months if there is prompt and zealous coöperation.

But the admiral maintained an invincible silence. Not even the Secretary of War could elicit any response. On the 19th of July Secretary Armstrong writes to General Brown:

War Department,
19th July, 1814.

General Brown:

. . . If Chauncey gives you his aid in taking Forts George and Niagara and intercepting supplies and reinforcements to Burlington and York, you will by the first day of September present a line of posts from the mouth of Niagara to Gloucester Bay covering and quieting all westward of that line and menacing Kingston, etc., to the East.

But on the 22d of July the Secretary of War was forced to write as follows:

. . . The delay and silence of the Commodore are unaccountable. My letter to you fixing the 1st as the day on which he would certainly leave Sackett's Harbor and by which your movements were to be governed, was written at the instance of the President, who was anxious to prevent any want of coöperation between the two arms from ignorance of each other's movements.

But not even the combined authority of the President of the United States and the Secretary of War could bring about a cooperation between the fleet and the army. It was the 10th of August before General Brown received a reply to his letter of July 13th. In that answer Chauncey wrote:

. . . That you might find the fleet somewhat of a convenience in the transportation of provisions and stores for the use of the army and an agreeable appendage to attend its marches and countermarches, I

am ready to believe, but, sir, the Secretary of the Navy has honored me with a higher destiny—we are intended to seek and fight the enemy's fleet. This is the great purpose of the Government in creating this fleet and I shall not be diverted in my efforts to effectuate it by any sinister attempt to render us subordinate to, or an appendage of, the Army.

In this letter the admiral showed himself to be a master of sarcastic utterance, the explanation being that he resented the action of the War Department in placing him second in authority to a military officer and bitterly resented the suggestion that the function of the navy was to be a mere appendage to the army.

This attitude and spirit of Admiral Chauncey is an illuminating commentary upon the efficiency and authority of the government at Washington. Small wonder that its war operations so frequently ended in shameful disaster.

Despairing of coöperation with the fleet, General Brown, acting under the advice of the Secretary of War, abandoned his ambitious plan for the immediate capture of Upper Canada and adopted one of more modest dimensions. On the 20th of July he advanced to Fort George, restored and equipped the Salt Battery across the river, seeking to allure Riall from the defences of the fort to a conflict in the open. But Riall with his slender force was wise enough to keep close within the fortress. Learning that Drummond had arrived at York with reinforcements and that he was moving toward Fort George, General Brown thereupon decided it was wiser to retire toward Queenstown, which he did on July 24th, closely followed by Riall. The change in the disposition of the British forces forced Brown to abandon his plan of marching to Burlington via Fort George and to adopt instead the plan of a cross country march from Queenstown straight upon the Heights.

General Drummond, on reaching Fort Niagara, with a view to disturbing the calculations of the enemy, dispatched Colonel Tucker with six hundred men up the river to Lewiston, causing the American forces at that point to retreat across the river to Queenstown. Drummond himself advancing up the Canadian side of the river, effected a junction with Tucker at Queenstown, and dividing the combined force of 1,600 men into two parts, sent

back Tucker with 800 of them to regarrison Fort George and Niagara.

With his 800 men Drummond then proceeded from Queenstown, intending to reinforce Riall, who had established himself upon a narrow roadway about two miles from Queenstown, leading westward, known as Lundy's Lane.

Meantime Brown, anxious for his base of supplies at Fort Schlosser and fearing lest his line of communications should be cut by the British forces under Colonel Tucker, had ordered General Winfield Scott in command of the First Brigade at Chippewa to advance toward Queenstown with the idea of diverting the British from their southward march toward Fort Schlosser.

Thereupon Winfield Scott, ever eager for action, set forth toward Queenstown and in a very short time came into touch with his enemy near the entrance to Lundy's Lane. Thinking that he had before him Drummond's whole army, he halted his brigade, which with Towson's battery and some mounted troops amounted to some fifteen hundred men in all, and made investigation. Finding that he had before him only a section of the enemy's army consisting of one thousand men under General Riall, he immediately deployed for attack. Meantime Riall under the impression that he had the whole American force in front of him, was abandoning his position on the west of Lundy's Lane, a rising ground of commanding position.

At that moment General Drummond arrived with his eight hundred men. Taking in the situation at a glance, he immediately countermarched Riall's men to reoccupy their former position on the rising ground, and strengthening the line with his own eight hundred, awaited developments.

Immediately Winfield Scott attacked, and the battle of Lundy's Lane was on.

The battle of Lundy's Lane was in a way an accident of fate, but once on, neither Drummond nor Brown had any illusions as to the immensity of the issues at stake. A victory would secure for the Americans the control of Upper Canada as far as Kingston. A victory for Drummond would mean that Upper Canada for months would be free from any dangerous attack from the enemy. Hence, as far as the generals were concerned, the fight must be to

a finish. With the subordinate officers and with the rank and file the battle would be a test of the fighting qualities of the opposing armies. In this conflict honor and fame were very definitely involved. In addition the deepest passions of both armies were aroused. The Americans were burning to wipe out the shame and humiliation of many defeats suffered during the past two years at the hands of altogether inferior numbers. The Canadians were furious at the aggression of the enemy upon their country and enraged at the wanton atrocities which the enemy had inflicted upon their people.

Lundy's Lane leads west at right angles from the main road to Queenstown, which is about one and a half miles distant. The battle ground extended from the crossroads to a slight rise four hundred yards away on the left of the lane. At the top of the rise stood a church. Round about were orchards and fenced fields, farther away toward the south of the lane was a thick wood. A rise, open fields with fences, two crossroads, thick woods—these were the physical features of the battle ground.

It was six o'clock in the evening of a hot July day. The British front held the top of the rise, upon which they had planted seven guns; their forces lay behind and to the left of the guns along the lane. The opening attack came from Winfield Scott's First Brigade with Towson's artillery on his right. Scott's first move was a swift thrust by his right flank under a dashing officer, Colonel Jessup. The thrust was successful for a time. Jessup's regiment pierced the British left, circled round to the rear, and captured General Riall, who was lying there badly wounded. In a short time Jessup was hurled back and the British left restored. For an hour and a half Winfield Scott with his gallant 1,500 fought desperately to break through the British 1,700, but in vain. The fight resolved itself into a series of attacks upon the British guns on "the rise." Again and again and yet again the bayonets of attackers and defenders crossed around those guns. Each could capture, but neither could hold "the rise." After an hour and a half of desperate struggle both armies were beginning to tire with the fight. At this point Brown came on the scene, bringing up Ripley's Second Brigade and Porter's brigade of militia with Ritchie's and Biddell's artillery. Forming a new front with these

troops, covering Scott's exhausted, shattered, but indomitable line, which was now drawn back into reserve, Brown saw at once that at all costs those guns on "the rise" must be taken. He found a man for this bit of work in Colonel Miller of the Twenty-first Regiment.

"Storm that work and take it," ordered General Brown.

"It shall be done, sir," replied Miller coolly.

In the growing dusk Colonel Miller with 300 men moved forward toward "the rise" and, unobserved by the British gunners, took cover with part of his regiment behind a stout log fence on the British right of the rise less than a hundred yards away from the guns, and there waited. At a signal his men sprang up and, firing a volley, which killed or wounded every gunner, charged forward, drove back the British center, and captured the guns. A gallant feat of war. But he could not hold. Once more the British center re-formed, charged forward, and recaptured the guns. Again and again the bayonets crossed—some ten times, it is said —over that fatal "rise." Then for a time silence fell, the Americans holding the ground. At this critical moment Colonel Hercules Scott's brigade, 1,200 strong, marching and countermarching under conflicting orders, setting out first from Twelve Mile Creek by DeCew's in the afternoon, then back again toward Queenstown, and finally, at eleven o'clock, making Lundy's Lane, covering thirteen hot and dusty miles, reached the crossroads and turned into the lane. In the dark the head of his column stumbled into an American line of infantry, was received with a shattering volley of rifle fire, and hurled back in confusion. But Hercules Scott was a tried and experienced officer. Promptly he re-formed his men and waited orders. General Drummond, coming upon the scene, told off some 800 to the reserve and sent the remaining 400 forward to extend his right, and thus reëstablished his line behind his captured guns. Once more that deadly fight for the guns began. Once more Drummond sent forward his reinforced line against "the rise," captured the rise and the guns, but yet again, with bulldog grit, the Americans came back with a counter attack. Forward and back the lines swayed, each declining to accept defeat.

By this time both Brown and Winfield Scott were wounded and

taken from the field. Drummond, also wounded, was forced to retire from the fight. It was now after midnight. Neither side could advance, neither would retreat. A silence fell upon the exhausted lines. Brown, from his tent and under the impression that his troops were in possession of the field, ordered Ripley to take his men back to camp for "refreshment and reorganization." In consequence Ripley moved the whole army off the field and retreated to his camp across the Chippewa, leaving the British guns in the possession of their own army.

General Brown, learning of this retreat, disappointed and enraged, at once ordered General Ripley to gather together a force from all possible units and return to the field to bring back the British guns. The early dawn was now beginning to break. When General Ripley, assembling a force of 1,500 effectives, all he could muster, approached the battlefield, he found Drummond's army astride the Queenstown road and his guns in position waiting attack. Thereupon Ripley wisely retreated behind the Chippewa and finally took his army for shelter under the guns of Fort Erie.

It was a bloody battle, fought with desperate courage and tenacity on both sides. The losses demonstrate so much. The American casualties were 860, being about 21 per cent. of their total force engaged during the battle. The British casualties were 878, being 29 per cent. of their total strength. While it was a battle for the most part of regulars on each side, the militia of both armies showed equal courage and endurance with that of the regulars. The militia of Porter's brigade were the equals in courage and tenacity of the regulars of Scott's or Ripley's brigades. In the British army the heaviest losses were those of the Eighth Regiment, which were 63½ per cent. of its total strength. The Royal Scots suffered casualties of 34 per cent., while the embodied militia showed casualties of 47 per cent. of their strength—a significant testimony to their valor.

It was the last battle in which General Brown and General Winfield Scott commanded. Their retirement was a source of incalculable loss to the American army. It was the last effort of an American army to conquer Canada.

Henceforth the Canadian frontier was never in danger.

CHAPTER LI

THE RUNNER'S LAST RUN

From sunset to dawn and throughout the long day following, in lumber wagons carefully equipped with mattresses, in hayracks full of sweet-smelling clover, in democrats, in carts, and carried on stretchers, the wounded were borne to the various improvised hospitals hurriedly prepared under Dr. Hector MacCrimmon's organized staff of medical officers and amateur nurses. The supervision of the transport line was in the hands of Charlotte Brookes, the nurses were in charge of Hope Radcliffe.

Throughout the night and during the long day Charlotte sat upon her horse directing the streams of wounded, and with the aid of half-a-dozen young girls checking carefully the data in every case.

As the day went on it was discovered that the British casualty list ran up to nearly nine hundred killed, wounded, and missing, the missing being a quite insignificant number. Into Charlotte's hands came all the reports. When the full list was in she rode to headquarters and asked for Captain FitzGibbon. She had been asked by Dr. Hector MacCrimmon to do this for him as every medical officer and every nurse trained and untrained were fully occupied.

Haggard, weary, hollow-eyed, but still cheery, the captain appeared.

"Oh, it is you?" he said, his smile vanishing.

"Have you seen him?" He had no need to ask who was meant. It was known throughout the army that Brock's runner was missing.

"No. I have had my whole command on the look-out."

"We have very carefully checked the wounded taken off the field. Where was he last seen?" Charlotte's voice was calm and passionless, her manner that of alert efficiency.

"Come into my office, Charlotte, out of the sun," said FitzGibbon, his voice vibrant with pity.

"Yes, I'll come in," replied Charlotte in a sharp businesslike voice, "but let us not waste time."

"Let me tell you," said FitzGibbon, taking her arm. "René was doing runner duty all day. Twice he carried orders to Colonel Hercules Scott, first to Twelve Mile Creek ordering him to come via DeCews. Then second he went to meet Colonel Scott four miles out from this field and turned him aside to Queenstown, then late at night he went to recall him here. In Colonel Scott's last charge for the guns René gathered all the scouts left—you know he had drilled them to be superb bayonet fighters—and they rode with him. Acting as Scott's aide, I saw in the dim moonlight that last fight about the guns. It was a terrific thing. Neither side would retire. They seemed just to gradually cease fighting. The last I heard was René's voice calling, 'Stay right here, boys!' and with that an Indian war whoop or two now and then. He always had half a dozen of the Mohawks about him, a kind of body guard."

"I know! Black Hawk and his friends," said Charlotte.

"And that was the last. There was a heap of dead—but he wasn't there."

"A prisoner perhaps?" asked Charlotte.

"The general sent over a special—but no result," replied FitzGibbon. "Still, of course, there's a chance," said FitzGibbon with resolute cheeriness.

"What chance?" inquired Charlotte, steadily looking at him.

Under that steady look FitzGibbon's cheeriness wilted. What chance indeed?

"McCloy was with him. But he is still unconscious," he said finally. "We may get something out of him."

"Thank you, Captain FitzGibbon," she said, giving him her hand. "He was proud to serve under you."

FitzGibbon bowed over her hand, but could not risk his voice.

The wounded were all carried from the field, the dead taken away for burial. She rode down the lane to the crossroads. At the crossroads she found the army bereft of many of its officers, its regiments, some of them, sadly shattered, but all, both officers

and men, showing a spirit of high courage, ready and waiting for the attack which never came. They were coming to realize the significance and the splendor of the conflict through which they had passed. They had met with an enemy for whose tenacious courage they had come to feel a new respect. They had not yielded. They were ready to meet him again.

Stricken to the heart though she was, Charlotte felt her spirit rise to greet the spirit of the men. With head carried high she rode through the ranks, returning the salutes of the junior officers who all knew her.

But when she had left the army behind her an overwhelming weariness possessed her as she gave her horse his head and allowed him to find his way homeward. As she rode along the short-cut trail, from Queenstown to her home, she was amazed to find that her heart made no response to the memories that crowded upon her. At the fork where the trail leaves the main road she drew rein. "Here it was he kissed me," she said to herself, her eyes wandering over the familiar objects about her, but she was unconscious of emotion.

"Why don't I weep? What sort of girl am I? I don't even feel sorry!" She put her horse to a sharp canter. She was afraid of herself. Like some wounded thing she felt the need of sanctuary. Some dark and quiet place where she could lie down out of sight and touch of all living things. Yes that was it. Away from living things. Death! That would be best. Her mind went swiftly homeward. Her father, her mother, even Edward, wounded though he was—they were living and were linked with life. Her heart was linked with death. Eustace? She had quite forgotten Eustace. How strange! He seemed a shadowy figure in a dim past. He was nothing, utterly nothing to her. She knew now that he had never been anything to her. How mad she had been ever to imagine anything else.

They all welcomed her tenderly. Her father was out. Her mother brought her food and was for putting her to bed. But now, strangely enough, she hated the thought of bed. She was afraid to be alone. Dr. MacCrimmon came in from visiting Edward and scrutinized her carefully. He called her mother out of the room.

"No word of René?" he said. She shook her head.

"Be careful of that girl but don't fuss over her."

"She won't go to bed. She seems to dread going to bed."

"Don't send her to bed. Keep her with you all, but don't appear to watch her."

The colonel came in, an old and haggard man.

"Charlotte has returned," said his wife. "She is terribly stricken."

"Stricken?" said the colonel dully.

"Yes, she feels René's loss terribly."

"Yes! She would. My God! I was wrong there too. Where is she? No, no! I don't want to see her—not yet. She will hate me—never forgive me. Oh, God! Help me, help me!" He flung up his arms wildly.

"Nonsense!" said Dr. MacCrimmon brusquely. "Let's have nothing of that just now. Let's keep everything at the normal. Remember, sir, you have a very highly strung and overwrought girl there to care for. No heroics! No lamentations! Above all, no self recriminations! Come in with me. Ah! Here's Eustace. Well, so much the better! Damn it!"

Never in all their experience of him had the doctor been known to swear before a lady.

"No word of René, Eustace?" inquired the colonel in a low tone as they were about to enter the living room.

"No, sir, the field has been really combed. The general is terribly disturbed. He sent me personally to the American camp. No word or sign there."

With a groan the colonel followed Eustace into the room. The silence was broken by Eustace.

"It was a terrific fight," he said, making conversation. "Straight, hard, slugging fighting."

"The losses are heavy?" asked the colonel.

"Nearly nine hundred of a casualty list," said Charlotte. "Here are the complete returns, Doctor." She drew a notebook from her pocket and handed it to him.

"There will be many sad homes in the Colony to-night," said Mrs. Brookes.

"Many are there with none to weep over them," said Charlotte. No one answered.

"René has none to weep for him," she continued.

"Oh, Charlotte!" cried the mother, sudden tears streaming down her face. "How can you? We all loved him so."

"None of his very own, Mamma, to weep for him. Perhaps he would be thinking of that. It would be hard for him." There was a terrible passionless calm in her voice. "And yet—I wish he had known that there is one—his very own."

"Charlotte dear!" cried her mother in an agony.

"Yes! His very own!" She rose and stood among them calmly terrible. "I loved him, Mamma. I loved him soul and body. I was his, only his."

"Charlotte!" cried Eustace in a piteous voice.

"Eustace? Ah, Eustace!" She pulled his ring from her finger. "Forgive me! I should never have worn it. I was a wicked girl. I wanted to be a grand lady—to be the mistress of a grand home—wicked and silly. But, Eustace, I never loved you. You must have known it. I tried to honestly. And you never loved me, Eustace—not as he loved me. No! no! Not as he loved me—because you couldn't. You see, I never loved you. You could love Nora just as much—I saw that quite well. No, I don't mind it, Nora, not a bit." She was as if reasoning with him quietly without passion. "Oh, I was wrong. I knew I was wrong—but how wrong I didn't know."

Her father came to her and said in a pitiful voice, "Charlotte, dear, why break all our hearts?"

"Papa, how could you think I would be happy with Eustace when I loved René? How could you, Papa, loving Mamma as you do? Oh, Daddy, you didn't think! You couldn't have thought."

"No, no, my child. God pity me!" groaned her father, his face in his hands.

"But I am blaming no one—it was my fault. I was wicked and cruel—cruel, oh, so cruel to him! How could I have been so cruel? He wanted me so. I know now how much. Oh! I should have been his wife—I could have shown him how I could love him. Oh, wicked and foolish!" Her voice, which had been

deep-toned but calm, rose abruptly to a cry. "Oh, René! René! my love! my love! my only love! I want you! Do you hear me? I want you! I want to tell you! God!" she cried in a wild, bitter, tearless cry. "God! Do you hear me? Let me go to him! I can't—can't——" She flung her hands out before her face and fell senseless into Dr. MacCrimmon's arms.

"I was afraid of this," he muttered. "What cursed fools we all were! Poor little girl! Poor little broken heart! Where shall I lay her? Upstairs somewhere. God grant she may keep her reason."

He carried her to her bedroom and, laying her on her bed, tried restoratives and sat beside her anxiously waiting results.

But in a very few minutes she opened her eyes and smiled up into the doctor's anxious face.

"I've had such a lovely dream," she said quietly. "I saw René. He wanted me. Don't cry, Mamma. I am quite all right. . . . Did I? . . . Oh, yes, I remember now." The light faded from her eyes. "I must not faint—I must not be weak. I have something to do for René's friends—for those he loved. There's Chick—bring Chick to me to-morrow—and there's McCloy, and Hope, and—yes, Black Hawk. You needn't be afraid, Doctor. I was very, very tired. I shall sleep now. Good-night, dear Mamma. He loved you and you loved him too."

The doctor laid his finger upon her pulse. "Quite steady," he said. "She will sleep all night and be better in the morning."

He proved a sound prophet. Next morning Charlotte woke quite refreshed. She was told that Chick was waiting for her.

"He is broken-hearted, poor child!" said Mrs. Brookes.

"I will comfort him," said Charlotte, and dressed forthwith.

Chick's big blue eyes were the eyes of a child who spoke with the voice of a man. For indeed the war had made Chick a man. Chick had been one of the party who had captured the Raiders, one of the first three indeed. He had been held back from that last deadly charge for the guns at Lundy's Lane which ended at last in silence, by Lieutenant FitzGibbon's grip on his collar.

"You will be my boy—man—now, Chick," said Charlotte when the boy came shyly toward her. "I am René's now, you know, and you were his good friend, and you and I will always

be good friends. I will always belong to René. I always did, you know."

"Yes, I knew all the time," said Chick, with a touch of scorn. "So did he."

"Did he?" The girl's voice trembled a little.

"You bet he did."

"Then I'll—I mean you will look after me now."

Chick nodded, an infinite sadness in his eyes.

"And Black Hawk, too. We must look after him."

"They say he was badly hurt," said Chick. "He was with René, and McCloy is always talking about him and René."

"We will ride some day soon to the Grand River, Chick, to see Black Hawk."

After Lundy's Lane all the convalescents were turned out of the Brookes Manor House to make room for the stream of human wreckage that flowed from that gory battlefield. Then the barn was cleaned out, all except the hay mow full of timothy and clover, and turned into a hospital as well. Mrs. Brookes was matron of the hospital, but the manager was Charlotte. It was Charlotte who looked after the supplies, Charlotte who organized the children too small to work with the women in the harvest fields into bands to scour the woods for Indian moss for dressings and for balsam gum and slippery elm for salves. It was Charlotte who found girls now and then to take the place of those pale and hollow-eyed nurses who would be found stumbling and *staggering* over their work. It was Charlotte too who took over the "Weekly Telling" from the old doctor, who now had no time for anything but his own work with the sick and the wounded.

In all this Nora had taken her part, but after Lundy's Lane, on consultation with the doctor, it was decided that Colonel Danby was suffering now more from nerve strain and heart strain than from his wounds and that recovery would be hastened by return to his own home.

"If I could help you any, Charlotte," Nora said, "I would gladly remain with you, but you know I can't."

"No, you can't, Nora, no one can help me," replied Charlotte. "You know that. You loved my boy, too."

"I would have," said Nora, her tears flowing freely, "but he wouldn't have it. Oh, Charlotte, I was for giving him my heart and soul and body, but he told me about you that night. He was just like a big brother to me, and that was all."

"Don't speak of it, please, Nora. He wanted to tell me, but——"

"Hush, dear," said Nora, her hand on her friend's lips. "But it is best that we go home. Father can bear the journey, and besides, he will never get well here. He has one wish, to see our President and Secretary Armstrong and get this wicked and cruel war stopped." The farewell was almost without words.

"Dear Mrs. Brookes," said Colonel Danby in a shaking voice, holding her hand in both of his, "I have neither the strength nor the words to say what is in my heart."

"You need none, dear Colonel Danby. We understand," said the old colonel's lady with sweet dignity. Looking very old, his face cut deep with grief, but still erect and courtly, Colonel Brookes waved his good-bye without a word.

At the very last Charlotte put her arms around Colonel Danby's neck.

"Good-bye," she whispered. "He thought much of you."

"And we loved him as we loved ourselves," answered the colonel, kissing her fondly.

"You will be good to Eustace," were Charlotte's last words to Nora. "Poor boy! He really is fond of you."

"He is coming to us after the war," replied Nora, a little flush coming up through her tears. "He is rather a dear, you know."

The most difficult part of Charlotte's duty was the "Weekly Telling." For the three weeks following Lundy's Lane were weeks of grievous anxiety. The reports came into Dr. MacCrimmon's hands and by him were prepared for "The Telling." At the end of the first week the report told only of General Drummond's investment of Fort Niagara. The delay in assaulting the fort was due to weakness in big guns, and to the need of reinforcements for his small and war-worn army. Events proved his error. For General Ripley, a cautious and none too

daring fighter, knew how to get the best out of his militia with the axe and spade.

Every few days Chick would come with news of the camp, which he haunted day and night. He was a born scout, keen-eyed, cautious, fearless.

"They're working day and night, hundreds of them, making big heaps of earth with guns on them, and——"

"How do you know, Chick?" asked Charlotte, to whom he always came with his news.

"I climb the trees and see right into the fort right over the walls. They're building a big fence of logs and brushwood right round the fort, and block houses, and what they call bastions, and all sorts of guns everywhere. And there ain't no scouting no more," he added in a tone of sad disgust.

"You ought to tell the doctor," said Charlotte.

"I do, but I'm only a boy." Then he added, "I seen that devil the other day. I wish I'd a had my gun."

"Whom do you mean, Chick?" inquired Charlotte, surprised and shocked at the look of savage hate on the boy's pale face.

"That Willcocks," he said with an oath, "on the parade ground. It was him that killed Mother. I wish he was in hell."

"Don't speak like that, Chick," begged Charlotte.

"Well, ain't he going to hell?" he demanded. "I'll get him one of these days. I'll have my rifle next time, you bet." The boy's eyes were like red coals, his voice hoarse with the fury of his passion.

Two days later he came to Charlotte, his eyes gleaming in his pale face with a wildness almost of insanity. "I got him," he said in a voice of savage triumph. "René promised he'd get him some day. He was drillin' them Canadian volunteers on the parade ground. Wish I could get 'em all!"

Charlotte made no reply. What reply indeed could she make?

After three weeks' preparation Drummond made his assault upon a work that had become a fortress bristling with cross-fire batteries, earthworks, bastions, the whole encircled from river to river with a stout abattis constructed by Ripley's clever engineers and axemen. The assault was made in three columns, with

desperate and persistent courage. Two of the columns shattered with gunfire and musketry were hurled back, broken and defeated. The third column under Colonel Drummond, the general's brother, a gallant officer of invincible courage, on its third attempt in the face of a withering fire made entrance to the north bastion and there held, repelling repeated attacks from the combined forces within the fort. Then came disaster. A magazine of ammunition beneath the bastion platform blew up in a terrific explosion, hurling some three hundred officers and men of the 103d Regiment to destruction. Thereupon Drummond withdrew his men to his own lines, sullenly waiting the counter attack which never came. It was a heartbreaking experience for Drummond, and all the more so that he had hoped to "strike such a blow at the enemy's force in the neighborhood as would altogether prevent his appearing again in any force on the Niagara frontier, at least during the present campaign." But though his army had lost heavily in the assault and was suffering severely through dysentery and swamp fever, like the bulldog he was, Drummond hung on grimly to his siege, carefully doling out to his exhausted men rations and ammunition, both running dangerously low.

"The Telling" that week was a bitter task for Charlotte. But with head high and with two spots of burning color in her pale cheeks she went at it. Clearly she pictured the various new features which had transformed the weak defences of the old Fort Erie into a stronghold of formidable strength. "And behind these defences the best fighters the enemy has yet produced. We were beaten but we need not be ashamed. The fortunes of war were against us this time. But for that terrific explosion the result might have been different. And our general is still holding the enemy to a defensive campaign, and that is better than having him raiding our homes."

Her voice rang out clear as a trumpet, her eyes flashed with the light of battle. The sick and wounded raised their feeble cheers.

"The scouting ain't no good," grumbled a voice.

"Shut up, you darned fool!" growled a comrade. In their minds there was but one scout, and he, alas! was no more.

A great silence fell upon the ward. The color faded from the girl's cheeks. The firmly cut lips trembled a moment.

"Don't you be afeared, Miss," said a voice with a strong Highland accent.

"Good for you, Glengarry!" roared another voice.

"Afraid?" cried the girl. "Afraid? Who's afraid?"

From every bed and couch came the response: cheers, oaths, yells feeble but indomitable. A swift rush of tears came to the girl's eyes. She waved her hand at them, stepped down from her little platform, and made her way from bed to bed, leaving with every sufferer a word and a smile and receiving from each adoring looks, prayers, and blessings as she passed. At McCloy's pallet she sat down beside the nurse watching there.

"He is asleep," whispered the nurse. "He hasn't moved for eight hours except for his medicine and drinks. It may be the end, poor boy."

"Or perhaps the beginning——"

"Hush! He's waking." As she spoke the blue eyes opened upon her with the calm light of reason in them. The eyes wandered round the barn in curious wonder.

"Where am I the noo?" he murmured.

"In the hospital, McCloy. Do you know me?" said Charlotte.

"Ay! I ken ye fine. Ye're the captain's lassie." A bright red flamed up in her pale cheeks.

"You are right, McCloy," she said, smiling brightly down upon him.

"Is he a'richt? Black Hawk's laddies took him awa."

Charlotte dropped swiftly on her knees beside him.

"What are you saying, McCloy? What do you mean?" She clasped her hands as if in prayer. "God help the boy!"

"I'm fair tired oot," he said, closing his eyes wearily.

"Oh, McCloy, they can't find him. Where is he? Do you know, McCloy? Oh, tell me!" The agony in her voice roused the boy.

"Ay! I ken fine. Black Hawk's laddies carried him oot o' yon stramash." He closed his eyes again. "I'm awfu' weary."

"Oh, God, can it be?" she whispered. She bent over and kissed the boy on the forehead. Again the blue eyes opened upon her with a quizzical smile in them.

"I'll tell yer lad on ye," he said, and closed his eyes.

Charlotte caught the nurse by the arm, her eyes staring wildly.

"Tell me! Is he sane? Does he know what he is saying?"

"His fever is quite gone. There is no delirium."

On flying feet Charlotte ran from the ward. At the door she found Chick waiting.

"Miss Charlotte——" he began.

"Chick—not a word! Get Gypsy and your own horse. Hurry! Oh, hurry! We are riding to the Mohawk Reserve." She dashed away into the house to make her preparations and, returning, found Chick with both horses saddled.

"There's the doctor," he said, pointing to the doctor, who was running toward her. "I told him."

"Hush! lassie! There may be something in this. I have seen the nurse. But you must not allow yourself to be uplifted. Three weeks and never a word of him. Oh, I would save you from heartbreak, my dear. But go! go! And send me word at once." Already she was on Gypsy and on the move. Again and again Chick was forced to put his hand on Gypsy's rein.

"Don't kill his mare," he said at last.

"What do you say? Oh! no! no! I must ride carefully!" But before long Chick's restraining hand was on the rein again. Halfway to the Grand River Chick insisted that the horses must feed. In vain he tried to make her eat some of the sandwiches which he had had the foresight to bring. She drank some water from the spring beside which they had halted, but eat she could not. She could not rest nor speak. One consuming desire burned within her, to get on.

The sun was touching the tops of the tall pines when they reached the Forks of Grand River. At the entrance to the pretty little village they came upon a young squaw busy tanning a deerskin. Charlotte rode straight to her and said, "We want to see Black Hawk."

The squaw looked up startled, uttered a low moaning sound, dropped her deerskin, and beckoning said:

"Black Hawk he go dead." Then she added quickly, "Come."

Following her, they came to the edge of the village, to a wigwam set among some spruce trees upon the banks of the Grand

apart from the other dwellings. At the door of the wigwam sat a beautiful Indian girl busy upon beadwork. As they reached the door the girl stood up and with a look of wonder in her lovely sad eyes gazed upon Charlotte. The squaw spoke a few words to her. She seemed not to hear them, but kept her eyes fastened upon Charlotte. Slowly she drew near and, touching the doeskin suit which Charlotte was wearing, said:

"Me make."

"Charlotte slipped from her saddle and stood close beside her. "You? You?" she gasped. "Then you are Lukowah."

"Me Lukowah. Running boy my brother," answered the girl proudly.

"No speak," said the girl again, her fingers on her lips. "Black Hawk, my man, go dead."

"Oh!" cried Charlotte, putting her arms about her and kissing her. "He is dead! I am sorry! sorry! You are my sister."

"Lukowah!" A voice weak and fretful came from within the wigwam.

Pale to her lips, Charlotte stood, leaning forward listening.

"Lukowah! I want you," again came the voice.

Charlotte made as if to spring forward. The Indian girl caught her by the wrist in a grip of steel.

"No go! Much sick! No noise!" she said, her eyes gleaming with a fierce light.

Charlotte fell on her knees, raised her clasped hands to the girl.

"I will be very quiet! Oh, very quiet! No noise! Let me see him. He is my man!"

Gazing down at her, the Indian girl's eyes grew softer. She flung her arms wide as if in renunciation.

"You man? Go!" pointing to the door. Then, seizing Charlotte's wrist, "No noise! No much talk," she warned.

"Oh, no! no! I will be very quiet! See!" She drew a deep breath and stood with calm, composed face. "I am very quiet."

"Go!" said the Indian girl, and stood aside from the door, her face pale and drawn, the light dying from her eyes.

Within the wigwam Charlotte stood hardly breathing, her

hands pressed hard on her heart. She could make out upon a couch of skins a face white, drawn, ghastly in the dim light.

"Lukowah!" came from the pale lips.

She ran out in trembling haste from the wigwam.

"Go in. He wants you," she said to Lukowah.

Then, seizing the boy by the arm, she cried, "Chick! Oh, Chick! He is alive! He is in there! Ride for the doctor! He will know what to do."

"We must have a horse," said Chick.

"Black Hawk horse, me get um," said the Indian girl, dashing off.

In a few minutes she returned with an Indian pony, and leaping into the saddle Chick was away. Late that night Chick rode to the doctor's office at the hospital and burst in upon him with a hoarse, broken cry:

"He is alive! He is in Black Hawk's wigwam! Oh, Doctor, Charlotte says come quick!"

"Boy," cried the doctor, seizing him by the collar, "speak reasonably, and speak God's truth or I will be slaying you on the spot."

"Oh, Doctor," sobbed Chick, clinging to the doctor's arm in the last stages of exhaustion, "it's God's truth! I heard him speak and Charlotte saw him and told me to bring you."

The doctor poured out a glass of milk.

"Drink that," he ordered sternly, "before you say another word. My God in Heaven, can it be? Eat that." He was flinging food upon the table. "Not a word out of you till you have finished."

With swift-moving fingers the doctor was dressing himself and throwing things into his medical bag, giving rapid commands meanwhile to his orderly whom he had summoned.

"Now, lad, tell me the quickest route."

"I'll show you," cried Chick, springing up from the table. "Only gimme a fresh horse."

"You? Not a hoof of you! Why, man, you are nearly dead! Sixty miles to-day!"

"Try if you can keep me!" cried Chick, his voice rising shrill.

"Just try! I'm going. I know the best trail. Get me a horse, I say!"

The doctor searched his face with a critical eye. "All right, boy! You are the lad! You will come!

"Get him the best horse there is," he roared at the orderly.

He rolled up some food and flung it into his bag.

The late harvest moon was riding high and under its light they made good time. Before dawn they reached the Grand River. As they were entering the village a dog's howl set the full chorus going. Immediately a dark form glided from the shadows. It was Lukowah. "Come!" she said, and put her hand on the doctor's bridle rein. Through the trees she guided them by a short cut direct to her wigwam. Before it a fire was blazing and on it a pot of boiling water which Charlotte had ordered to be ready. "Good!" grunted the doctor, pointing to the pot, and passed into the wigwam.

Half an hour later he came forth into the light of the rising sun. With him was Charlotte, her face composed, her hands steady, her lips firm, her dark eyes seeking to read his grave, set face. But no question did she ask. She was waiting orders.

"We must get him at once to the hospital," at length said the doctor. "We will carry him on a stretcher as far as the main road. A spring wagon will meet us there."

Still the girl's eyes were seeking to read that grave set face. The doctor turned and faced her, taking her hands in his. The white, worn face seemed to grow even whiter. His words came with painful dliberation. "There is a chance that he may live."

Clinging to his hands, she swayed on her feet. From her closed lids two big tears ran down her cheeks. "Steady, lass!" The doctor's voice was stern, almost harsh. "He needs all we have." Swiftly the dark eyes opened. "Forgive me, Doctor!" she whispered with pale lips. "I am ready! I will not fail you."

"You must not, and you will not," said the doctor brusquely. "No excitement. Take your orders and obey them. First, food—we all need it."

"I have it ready, Doctor. Partridge, bannocks, berries. Lukowah has prepared them."

"Good girl! You have indeed kept your head."

"And the Indians are ready with a deerskin stretcher. They are all his friends and Black Hawk's."

"My God, what a lassie you are!"

"And Lukowah here has an interpreter to answer all your questions about him."

"Hear to that now! You have thought of everything. I might have known," said the doctor. "There will be no failure with you, lass. We will march before an hour."

"And Gypsy is ready," added Charlotte.

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the doctor, moved out of his stern calm. "We will win yet."

"May Chick speak to him?" asked Charlotte, noting the tremulous lips of the boy.

"Let me catch him! Not a word out of you!" snapped the doctor, turning upon Chick.

Chick gazed dumbly at him, shaking his head.

After they had eaten, a band of some twenty young Indians, friends of René's, stripped to the loin cloth, still in their war paint and feathers, appeared at the door with a deerskin stretcher hung by thongs upon two springy spruce poles.

"Let me try that thing," ordered the doctor, laying his huge form down upon the stretcher. With a slight laugh four men picked him up and set off, dodging among the trees. Along the trail with quick light steps, ever delicately on their toes, they carried him at a dog-trot as if he had been a babe. At a word of command from the chief, where the trail grew narrow, the four without pause or jar or jolt gave place to two. Again after a time, where the trail widened, the two to six, three on a side, still without break of step or jar or jolt. Back they brought the doctor along the trail and gently they laid him down at the door of the wigwam.

"God is wonderful!" exclaimed the doctor, "that he can make such creatures as you. How many to carry the boy the thirty miles?" he inquired through the interpreter. The chief of the band held up two fingers.

"Two carriers thirty miles!" exclaimed the doctor.

The Indians smiled. The chief held up four fingers, then six. "He says," explained the interpreter, "two better on narrow

trail, four men better than two, six better than four on wide trail."

"Then we shall have three relays. The whole twenty of you, and not a wagon will we use all the way. Man, it is like going in a cradle."

Thus by the dark-skinned companions of his boyhood, carried all the way at an untiring dog-trot and in such royal style, René made his journey back to his comrades of the camp.

It was evening as they neared the hospital. The doctor rode on before to make sure that all was in order. He found the hospital rocking with excitement, for an Indian runner had gone forward with the news. Out of their beds, every scout and scores of René's comrades had struggled, eager for a glimpse of his face.

The old doctor was furious.

"In, out of this," he roared, "every one of you! And not a word, not a peep, not a cheep out of one of you! Do you want to rob the boy of his one chance of life?"

Like children detected in a silly prank, they all slunk grinning back to their cots.

Thus, not knowing what was taking place or how, René found himself on waking next morning between clean sheets, smelling of sweet lavender, in Charlotte's own bed, in Charlotte's own room, and with Charlotte herself, white-faced, quiet, tender-voiced, starry-eyed, at his side. He was, however, dangerously weak. The long stretcher journey, easy as it was, had drawn heavily upon his meager store of strength. Through the day he lay with closed eyes almost unconscious. The doctor remained in close attendance, anxiously watching every breath. As evening fell he opened his eyes, gazed about him wondering.

"Lukowah," he whispered.

The Indian girl came from behind a screen where she had been waiting. He raised his head, took her hand in his, then sank back and lay with eyes closed breathing heavily. The doctor bent over him and laid his finger on the pulse. Hastily he caught up a glass of stimulant and forced some of it between René's lips and waited. There was no response. Charlotte came and stood beside him. "My God! Is he to slip from us after all?"

he muttered. Again he forced a few drops between the pale lips. The boy's breath came in deep, long gasps. His eyes turned back in his head.

"Is he dying, Doctor?" Charlotte's eyes were wide with fear. "Doctor, don't let him die!" she cried. "He must not die!"

She dropped beside the bed, put her arm under the boy's head.

"René! René! It's Charlotte!" Her voice rang out full, clear, penetrating. "René, don't go from me! I want you, René! Come back to me! Oh, René! Don't you hear me? I love you, René! I love you, boy! I am yours, yours, René! Don't go from me!"

The eyelids fluttered open. The eyes rested upon the girl's face. Somewhere hovering in the shadows he heard—heard the heart-call, the vibrant call of love, of life—heard and came back to life and love.

THE END

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